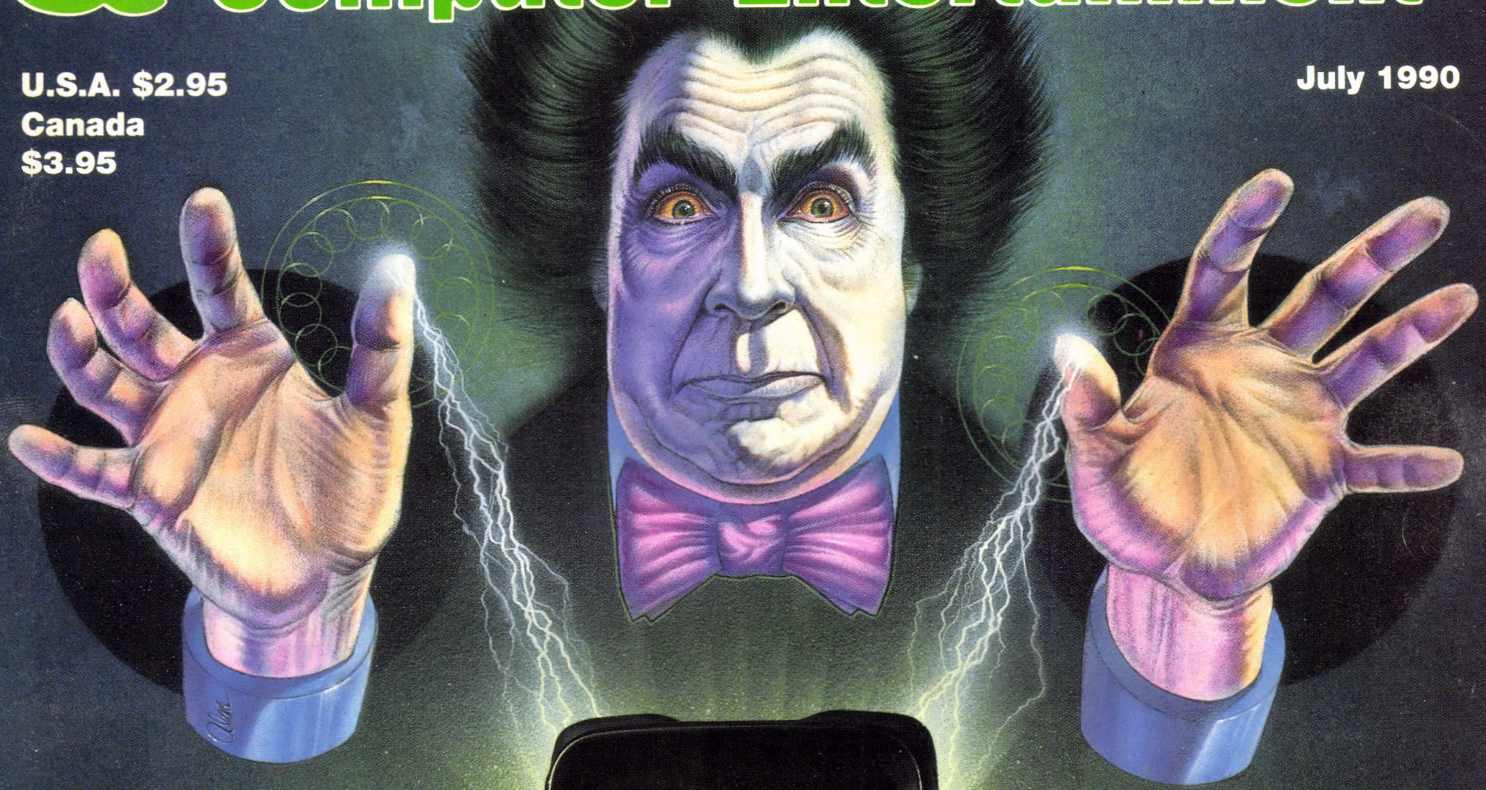
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Electronic Arts to Develop NES and Genesis Games

MAPS AND TIPS:

Sunsoft's
Batman, Part II

Sega's
Alex Kidd in the Enchanted Castle

ABRACADABRA!

OUT OF THE SHRINKING MACHINE!
NEC SHOWS OFF THE TURBOGRAFX-16 PORTABLE!

Look Inside for Details!

YOU COULD WIN A TG -16 SYSTEM—
TURN TO PAGE 58 FOR CONTEST RULES

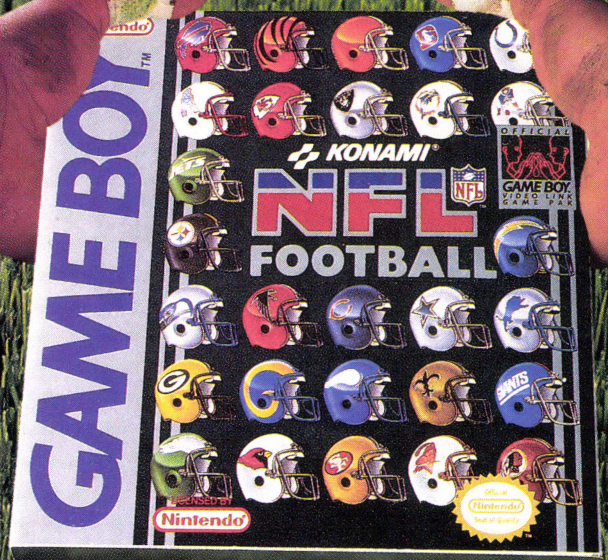
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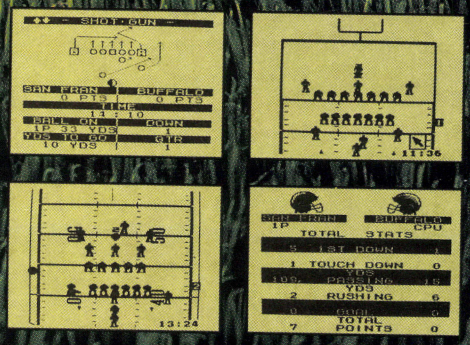
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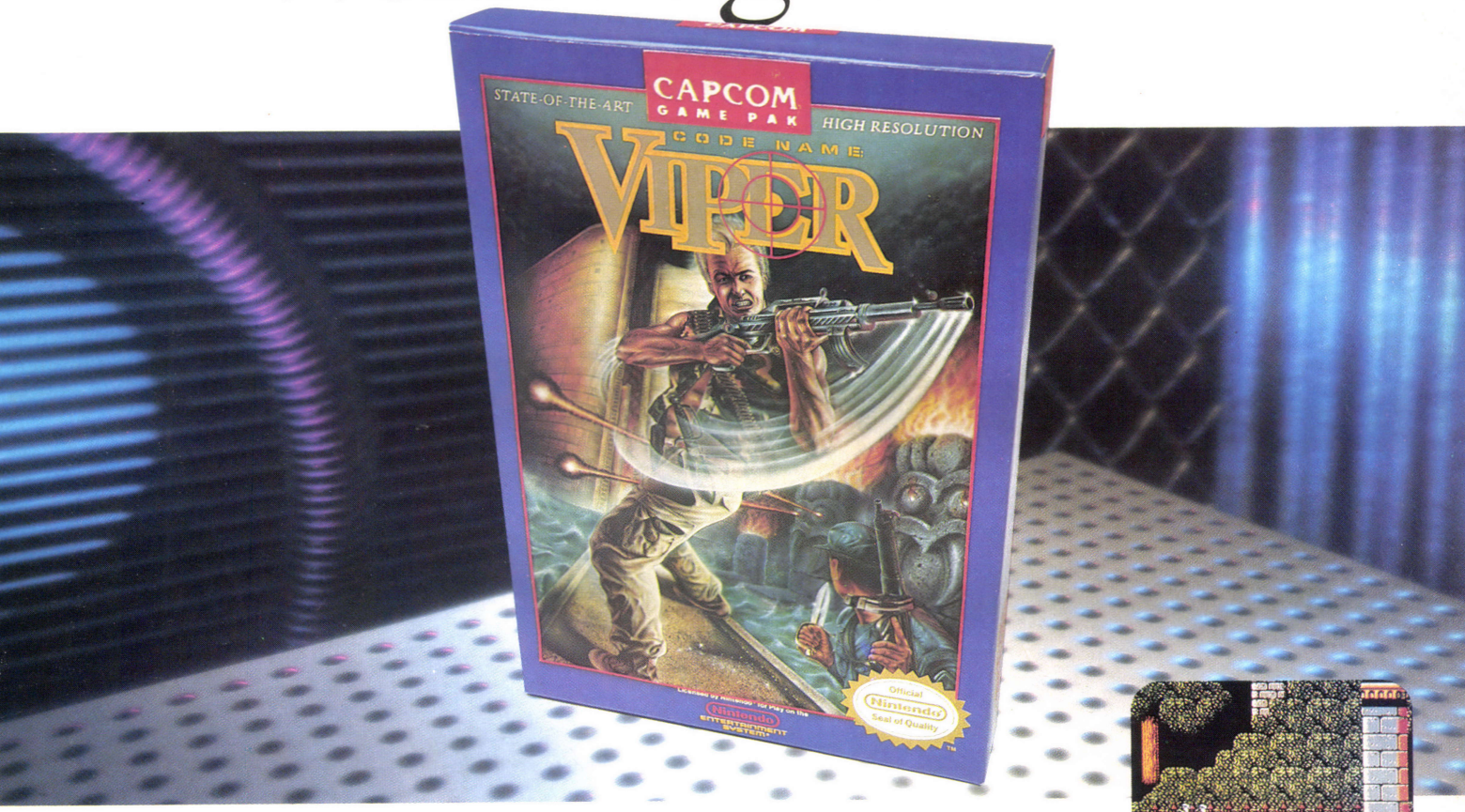
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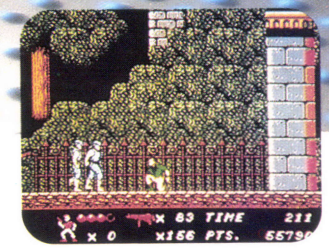
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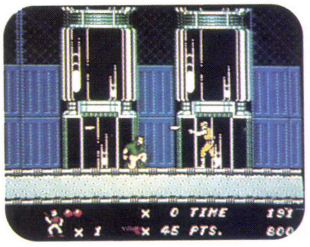
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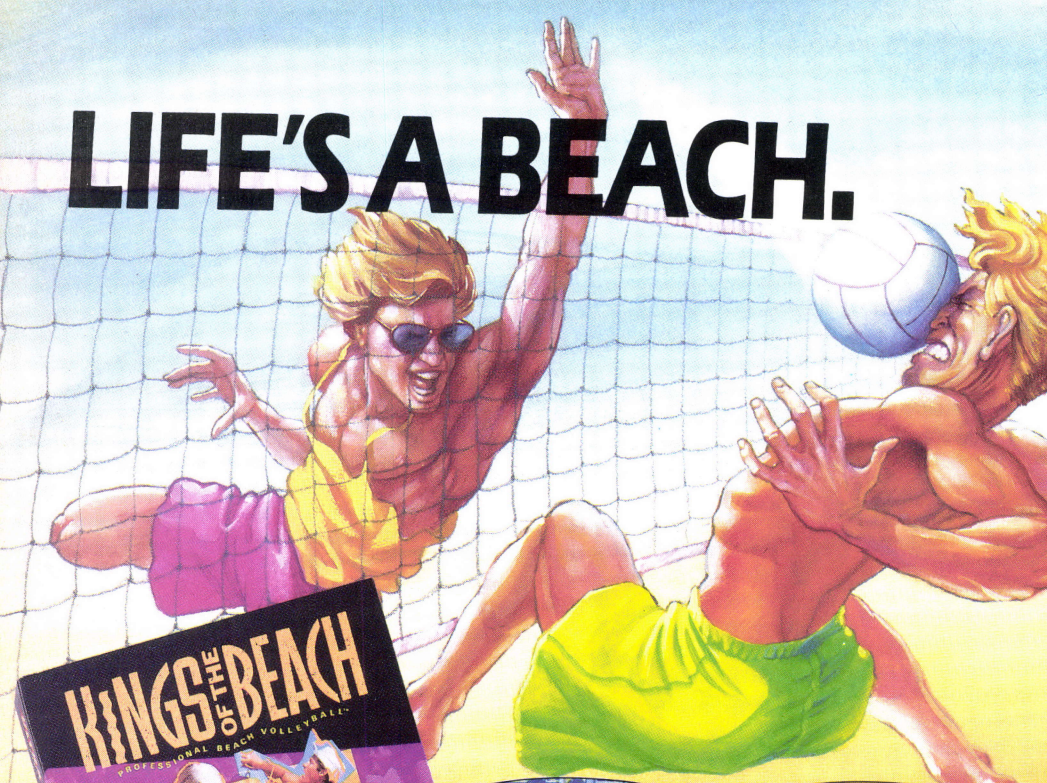
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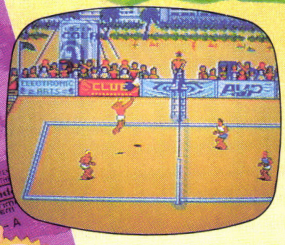
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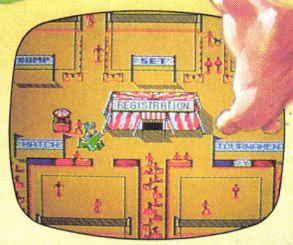
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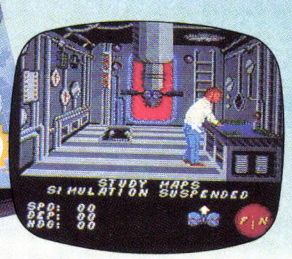
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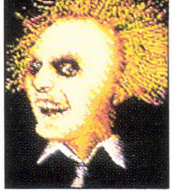
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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: NEC's mad scientists have been working hard at shrinking down the TurboGrafx-16 into a handheld package. Will it hit our shores before Christmas? Turn to page 56 to find out what the plans are for this wonderful machine.
Cover Art: Alan Hunter

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This second and final tutorial will lead you through the final levels of this exciting game, right up to your confrontation with the Joker himself. Don't give up.
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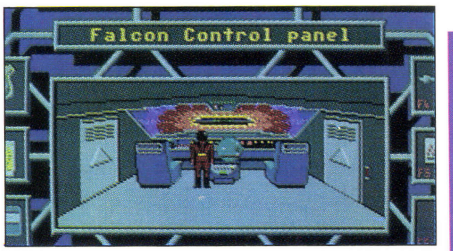
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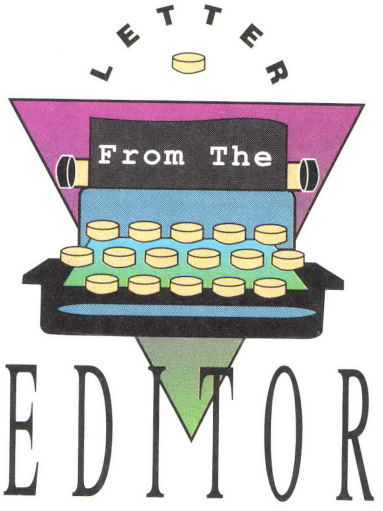
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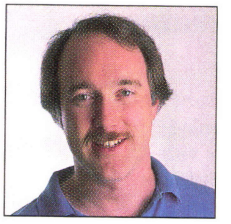
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It's been one of the most asked-about products in the video-game world: the TurboGrafx-16 portable. It's a pleasure that we can bring you pictures and information on it. Frankly, we're excited that the portable world has taken off this year and have upped our coverage accordingly. (For example, we've started a new column that will be devoted to portable gaming called *Gaming on the Go*.)



Unfortunately, two recent events stole a great deal of my excitement. First, VG&CE received a letter from a reader who claimed our magazine was hypocritical. He felt that we did too much "Nintendo bashing" while getting paid to advertise its products.

Normally, my demanding schedule doesn't allow me to personally respond to each letter we receive, but I felt strongly enough about this accusation to phone. For the record, we've never received any ads (nor do we expect to) from Nintendo; the "Nintendo" ads this reader referred to were from the many Nintendo licensees that produce software for the NES and Game Boy.

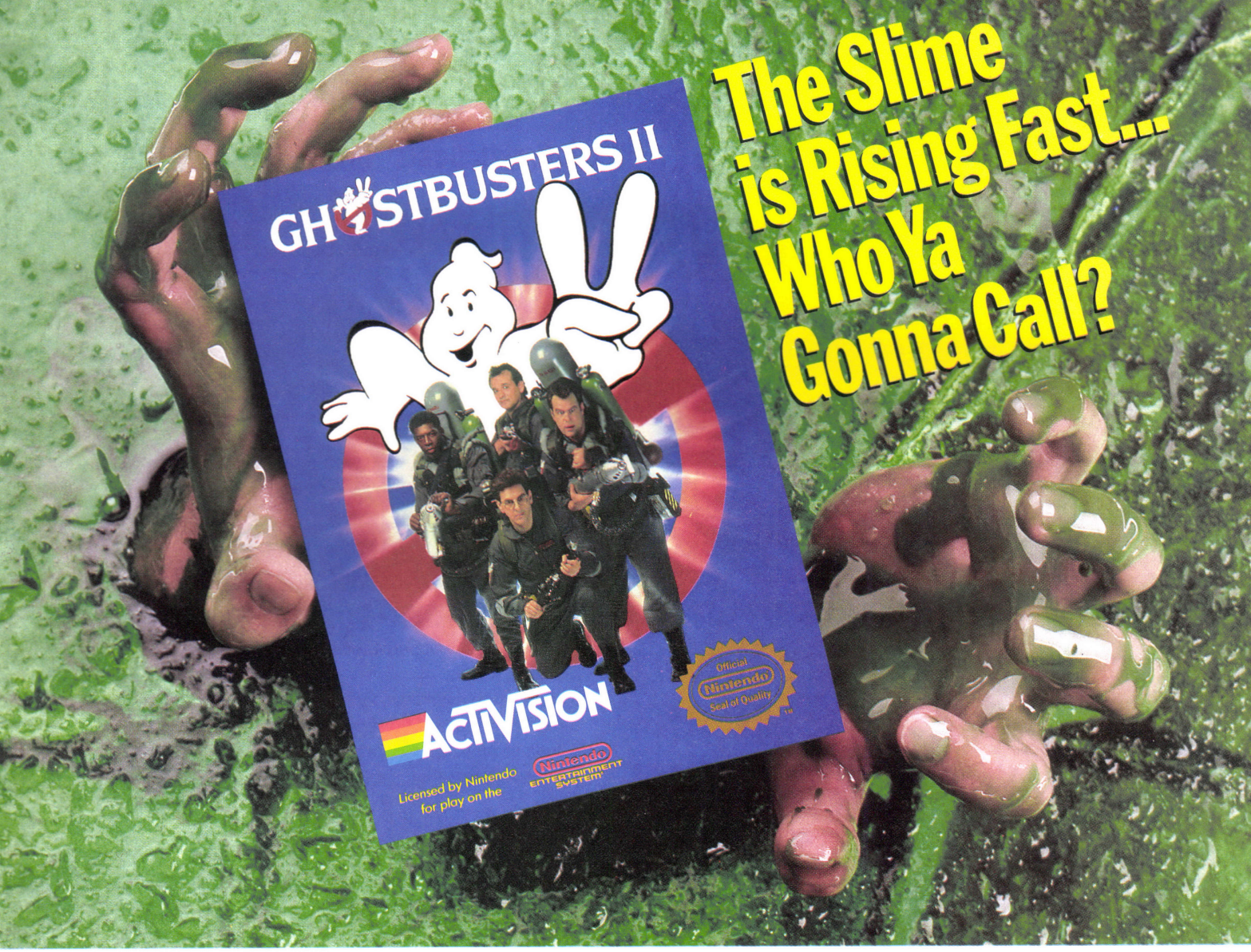
However, even if Nintendo chose to advertise in VG&CE, it wouldn't deter us from criticizing their products or business practices if we felt they were negative. We've never felt that our role was to praise companies simply because they chose to buy an ad in our magazine. We create VG&CE for the reader, providing news and information—positive or otherwise—that we feel the *reader* wants to hear about.

The second item, along similar lines, concerns the Nintendo World Championships, which we covered in the June issue. For some reason—though we feel it's tied to our Assistant Editor Donn Nauert's appearance at the first NWC—Nintendo chose to alter the official rules *after* the Dallas event. The new rule states: "Professional video-game players and editors of video-game publications are... ineligible to compete." Not to cry over spilt milk—I think, at 32, my days as a competitive player are past—if Nintendo is, as it said in an NWC press release, looking to "identify the best video-game players across the U.S. and Canada," it shouldn't exclude *anyone*. We certainly don't have any more winning secrets than a player who has already competed.

Also, there are reports of disqualifications over the use of certain techniques Nintendo feels lend an unfair advantage. Furthermore, there is nothing in the rules—at least the latest set we've seen—to deem these moves illegal.

Fiberglass poles upped the thrill in pole vaulting. The NWC, similarly, is a *skill* contest; it's sad that Nintendo is hiding its lack of preparation by changing the rules ex post facto.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor



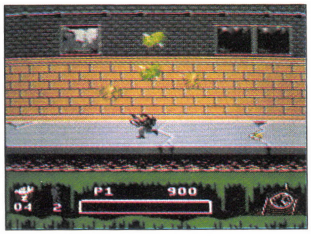
The Ghostbusters are Back! And Activision brings you the slimiest scenes from the blockbuster movie. Shift into high gear in your Ectomobile. Exterminate the paranormal pests at the courthouse. Pound the pavement with the Statue of Liberty. And slime Vigo at the Museum of Art before he rings in a nasty New Year!

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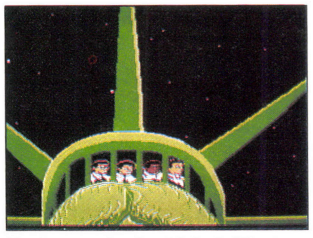
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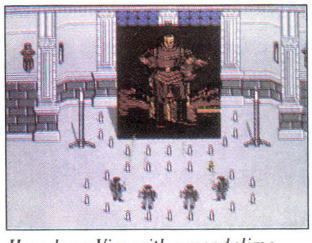
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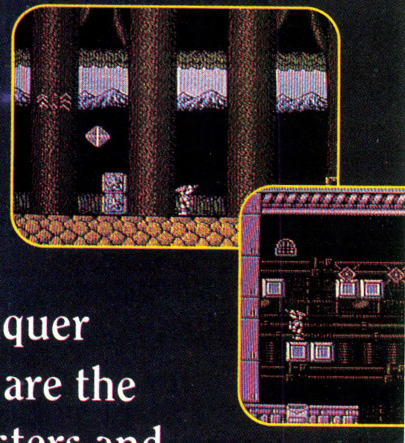
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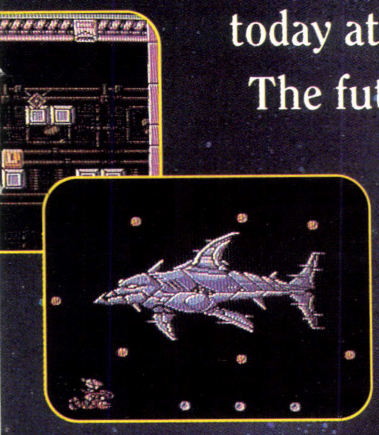
VENTURE

ge Is Real. The Game Is XEXYZ.

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NEW-SYSTEM QUERIES?

Dear VG&CE:

I have two questions. First, is the Konix Multi-System a computer or a video-entertainment system? Second, are its graphics as good as today's Sega Genesis?

—Walter Costello
North Ft. Meyers, Florida

Dear VG&CE:

I'd like to say that you're the only video-game magazine I've seen that isn't in favor of any one video-game system. Here's my question: Why isn't Nintendo releasing the Super Famicom? Sales are bound to decrease from the effect of other high-quality machines, and they've bragged about it in *Nintendo Power*. So why are they holding back?

—Jason Diaz
El Paso, Texas

We wrote about the Konix Multi-System in the November 1989 and March 1990 issues, but, unfortunately, that's all the information we have so far. It looks to be a dedicated disk-based video-game system—no keyboard has been shown yet—but don't rule anything out because it's a powerful piece of hardware. No date has been set for an American release.

On the Nintendo front, according to our sources, Nintendo has taken the Super Famicom back to the drawing board for upgrades. At first, the system was believed to be equal to the P.C. Engine and Mega Drive (the Japanese version of the TurboGrafx-16 and Genesis, respectively). We're sure Nintendo decided that the video-game players of the world would want something more than just another game system. Expect the Super Famicom to be released sometime around spring of 1991 in Japan and by Christmas of '91 here in America, though some of our recent contacts have put the American release at sometime in 1992! Lots of industry people say that this is too long for Nintendo to wait. We'll have to see what happens, because Nintendo won't make any comments one way or the other.

MAYBE 11 OR 12 BITS, BUT DEFINITELY NOT 16

Dear VG&CE:

What with all the fuss about Nintendo's 16-bit Super Famicom, here's something that should turn a few heads. Recently, I was flipping through an old issue (September 1989) of an imported U.K. gaming magazine when an advertisement for an electronics store caught my eye. The reason this ad stood out so much was because it was advertising "the new 12-bit Nintendo!" 12-bit? What happened to 16-bit? I thought my vision was impaired due to the large amount of games I play, but a second look proved it. I'm begging you to get to the bottom of this! I've lost too many hours of sleep over this elusive machine.



—Graham McLeod
Lakefield, Ontario, Canada

We were a little puzzled as well, especially when we called the store and they said they had one—and over 800 games for it. Our contacts in England checked into this for us and came up with this: The company apparently got their numbers mixed-up, and what the store is advertising is the regular 8-bit Famicom (the Japanese version of the venerable Nintendo Entertainment System).

TURBOGRAFX-16 SOFTWARE UPDATE

Dear VG&CE:

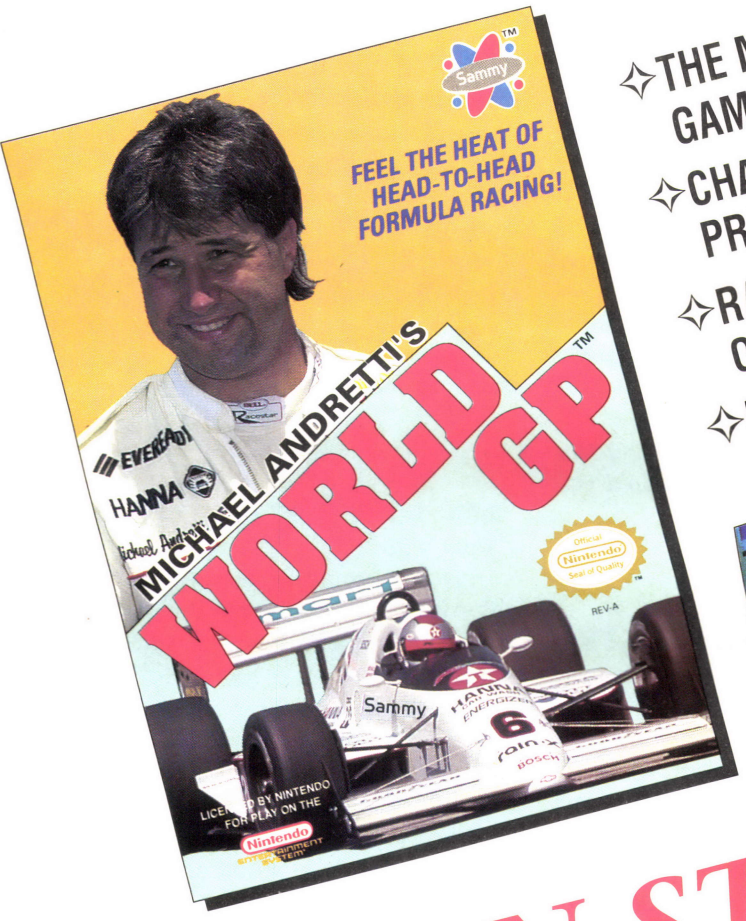
It's quite ironic that I would read your *Letter From the Editor* (VG&CE, March '90) one day after receiving a call from NEC regarding a letter I had written to them concerning the TurboGrafx-16, its software and its marketing. VG&CE also received a similar letter in reference to the TG-16.

The gentleman I spoke with explained that licensing games for the U.S. market has been made very complicated by the legal maneuvering of Nintendo. NES licensees have been extremely reluctant to license games for the TG-16 and the Genesis for fear of having their NES license canceled.

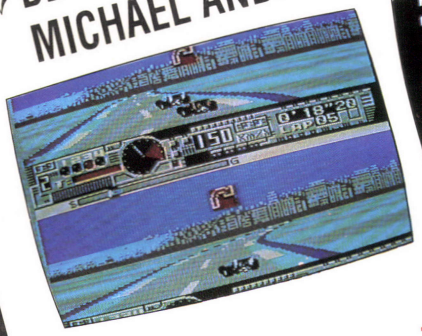
I mentioned *Twin Cobra* from Taito to the NEC spokesman. He said that NEC is negotiating with Taito presently, but most likely (if a contract is signed) there will be one or two games currently unheard of in the U.S showing up on our shelves. Even a corporation the size of Taito is reluctant to "bump heads" with Nintendo!

In contrast, he said that negotiations are almost completed with Tengen for ten Atari coin-op translations. Of course, Tengen is not bound by the Nintendo stranglehold. Further, it's also quite evident that Tengen/Atari Games is being drained financially by

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.



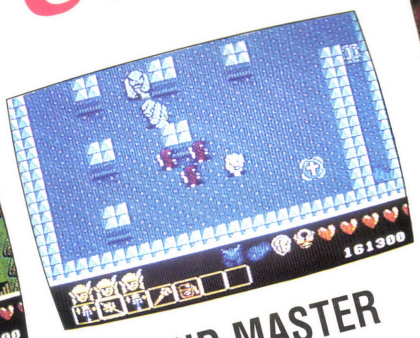
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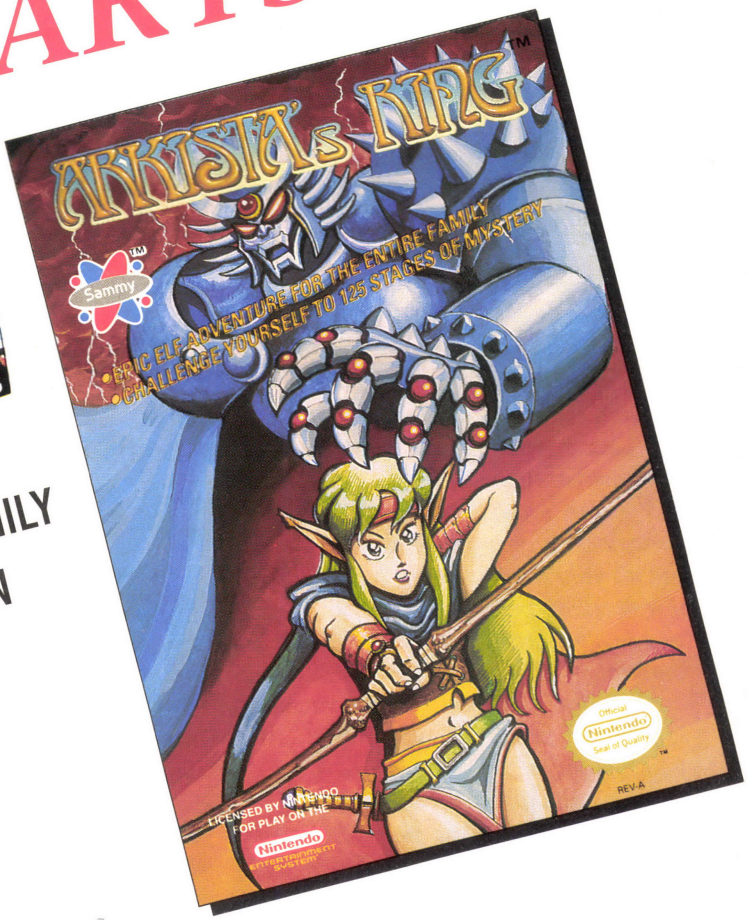


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tangling with Nintendo in court.

All in all, I'm convinced that Nintendo is doing everything possible to limit fair competition in the U.S. marketplace. It may be "shady" in the sense that it has utilized very sophisticated legal maneuvers to stifle the competition.

I truly believe that if corporations such as Taito, Capcom, Konami, etc., had the legal "free hand" to simultaneously release games such as *Castlevania 2*, *Strider* or *Twin Cobra*, Nintendo might not have such a vicious stranglehold on the current video-game market.

Ideally, the computer game arena regularly sees the multiple release of many top-notch and just "regular" games. It should be the same with video games, as it is in Japan.

Nintendo definitely needs to be deregulated! I give it full credit for reviving an almost-dead market, but that has allowed it free rein to totally mold the rules of the game in the U.S. to its profitability.

I think our government should step in and promote a more open marketplace. Let each company rise and fall on its own merits and marketing expertise.

I'm looking forward to playing *MegaMan* or *Super C* on my TG-16. And congratulations on being the "relayer" of the gamers' opinions. It's time for free enterprise!

—Brian Johnson
Riverdale, Illinois

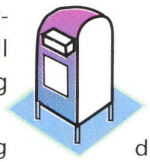
Thanks for offering your opinions and your support, Brian. Indeed, as we have said previously, we feel that there are some shady goings-on in the American video-game marketplace, but it's very hard to prove. Intimidation, if it is taking place, is an effective way of curtailing criticism though difficult to determine. The old line, which may be a credo for third-party NES licensees, is, "Don't bite the hand that feeds you." None of these companies want to take a chance at losing their slice of the multi-billion dollar pie that Nintendo has cooked, though, from our research and discussions, many of them are constantly looking at the situation. After all, many of the NES licensees in the U.S.—such as Sunsoft and Taito, as you mentioned—have Japanese counterparts that are producing games for other systems over there. It's natural for translations of this software to appear here for the TG-16, Genesis and Lynx, but we understand that contracts restrict the same game from appearing on the NES and other systems simultaneously.

Hopefully, the U.S. Government will successfully investigate the industry and determine once and for all whether dirty deeds are taking place. We're not interested in hurting the video-game market; instead we'd like to see it continue to thrive.

PLANNING FOR PORTABLES

Dear VG&CE:

First, I would like to commend you on your excellent magazine. Second, I have a question about your article in the February 1990 *News Bits* column (page 18). It reads: "The as-yet-unnamed and unpriced modular system will accept standard TurboGrafx-16 cartridges." I'm really looking forward to this new portable. But if I don't own a TG-16 console and I purchase a portable, since the portable will accept standard TG-16 games, does that mean I would have to pay regular price for them? That would be pretty expensive, don't you think? For example: Nintendo's Game Boy has separate cartridges for half the price. Can you help me with this problem?



—Garrett Blahunka
Whiting, Indiana

Game Boy software is not as advanced as NES software, and certainly not as sophisticated as TG-16 games. The key is that the proposed TG-16 portable will play TG-16 games on a smaller scale, as opposed to the Game Boy, which has software written specifically for it. Nintendo does not yet have a portable that will accept NES cartridges. (There has been talk of an NES-compatible portable in the works from another company, though rumors tell us that it may never appear.) If there was one, you'd still have to pay regular price for carts. Software companies and stores wouldn't know which system you plan to play the games on, so they couldn't offer separate prices.

From Japan comes news that the working name for the TG-16 portable is Game Tank, and it's still slated for availability in the U.S. by the end of the year. (We'll have more information in a later issue of VG&CE.*) Plan on spending about $250 for this machine.*

HOW DO THINGS DEVELOP?

Dear VG&CE:

I read your magazine with frequent enthusiasm and appreciate the efforts you go through to keep us advised about the computer-game market. However, I have not seen much information regarding another sect of the gaming world: those of us who want to *write* those games.

I am a computer professional who has been searching for addresses, personnel and general background about some of the more "well-known" game manufacturers, like Sega, Atari, Konami, Acclaim and Capcom, with the hopes of determining employment opportunities with them.

What do you recommend that an enthusiastic programmer do to develop connections with these companies?

—Kenneth Crow
San Antonio, Texas

The Inside Gaming *column in our November 1989 issue had good, though humbling, advice for budding game designers. However, if you want to program games, it's best to send a résumé to a company's personnel director. The address for a game company can generally be found on its game boxes or in the documentation, though our December 1989 issue contained a detailed list.*

Correction

"Military Madness Strategy Guide" (May 1990) contained an error. For Stage 3 on the second moon, the code is LIPTUS, not LIPTOS.

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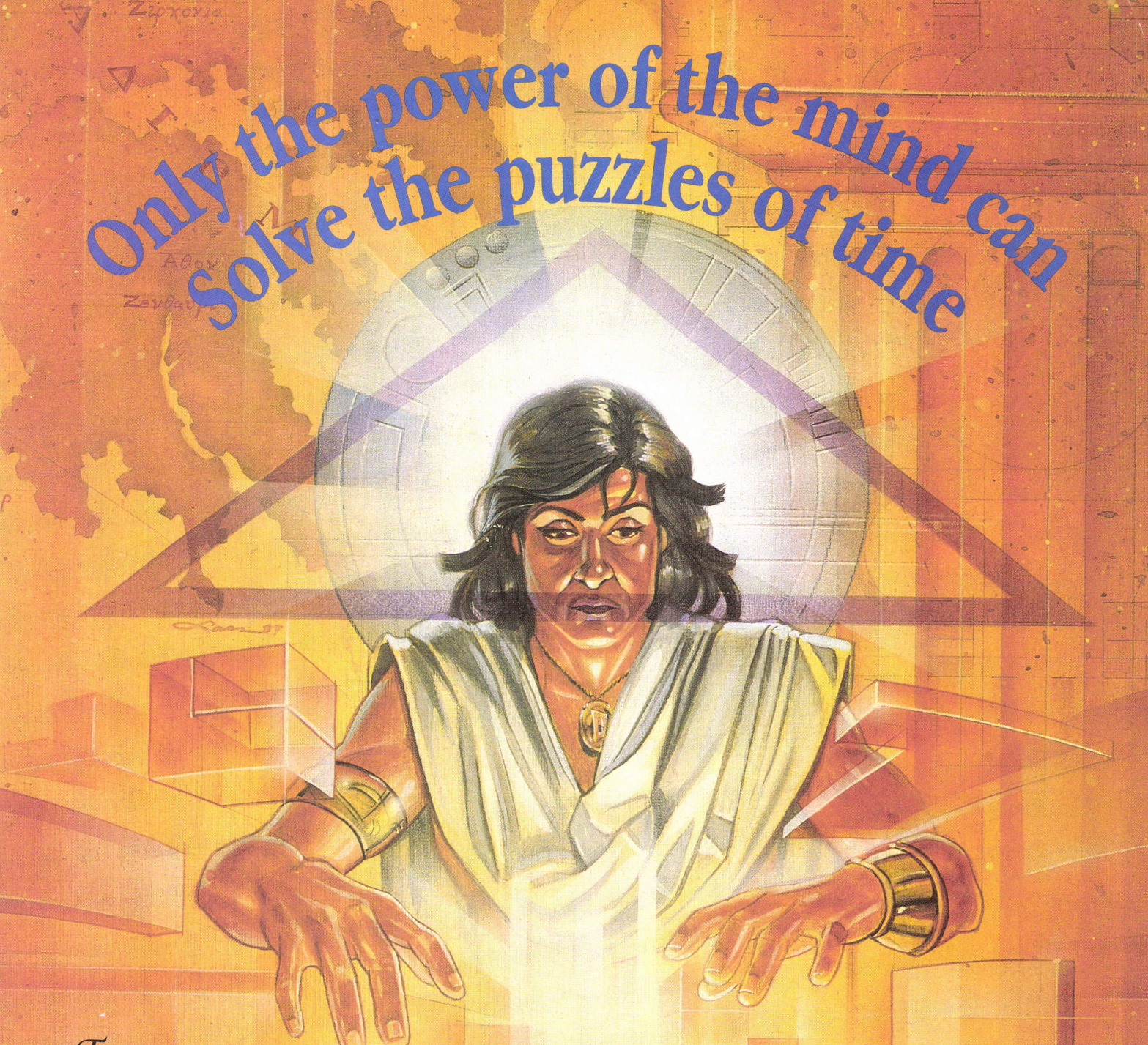
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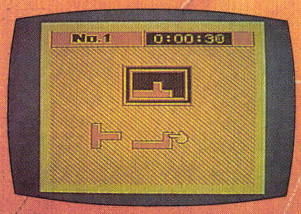
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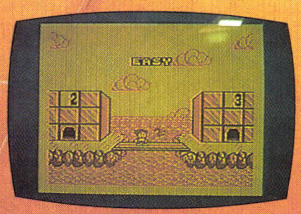
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Each month, beginning July 15th, 1990, a drawing will determine 400 winners who will receive prizes including a Daedalian Opus™ jacket. The last drawing for the final 400 winners will occur on November 15th, 1990.

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Five entries will be drawn for the tournament. Each of these five winners will be awarded $1000 cash, a trip for two to Los Angeles (hotel accommodations and meals are included), two tickets to Disneyland, a Light Boy accessory for use with Game Boy™, and a chance to compete against each other in the Daedalian Opus™ tournament at a CAPTRON World of Nintendo center.

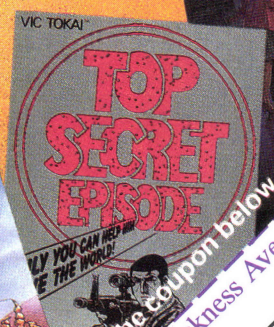


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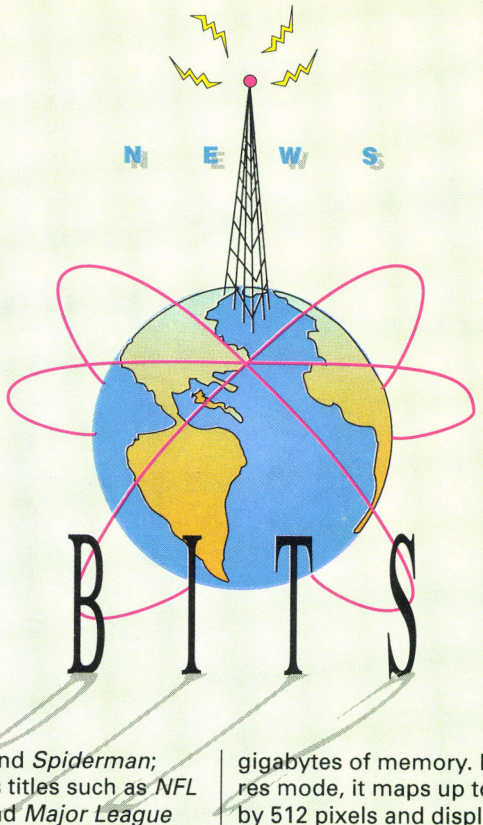
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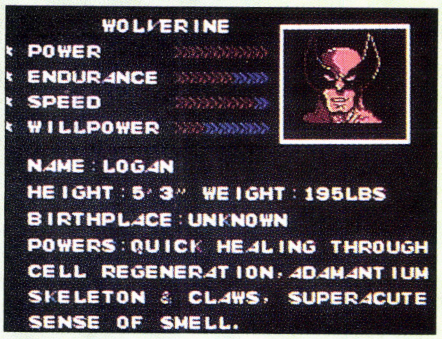


LJN Purchased by Acclaim

In a surprise move that doubled the company's number of licenses to produce NES cartridges, Acclaim Entertainment purchased all shares of LJN, Ltd. from its parent company, MCA, Inc. The purchase price, a combination of cash and Acclaim common stock, was undisclosed.

LJN was established roughly ten years ago as a toy company. Among its more successful products were a line of action figures featuring WWF wrestling stars. LJN is currently best known as a publisher of software for the Nintendo Entertainment System.





Along with LJN's other assets, Acclaim acquired the LJN product line of NES games including games based on popular movies such as *Back to the Future, A Nightmare on Elm Street, Beetlejuice, Roger Rabbit*; comic-book heroes such as Marvel's *X-Men, The Punisher* and *Spiderman*; plus sports titles such as *NFL Football* and *Major League Baseball*. Acclaim also gained LJN's right to publish five additional NES game carts this year, bringing Acclaim's license to a total of ten NES titles per year.

According to Acclaim spokespersons, the company plans to divest itself of LJN's nonsoftware products, such as the Entertech water gun.

Industry Gets Update on FM-Towns

Fujitsu demonstrated their personal computer, the FM-Towns, at the Microsoft CD-ROM Conference in San Francisco. It was the second time the new computer has been publicly displayed in the U.S. The new computer went on sale in Japan about a year ago, and Fujitsu officials said they wanted to update the U.S. electronic industry on applications for the FM-Towns.

The new computer is a 32-bit graphics workstation, with up to four gigabytes of memory. In hi-res mode, it maps up to 1,024 by 512 pixels and displays 256 colors on-screen, from a palette of over 16 million hues. It's said to have arcade-quality video-hardware scrolling and allow control of over 1,024 sprites simultaneously. It has eight-channel PCM and six-channel FM high-fidelity stereo sound, MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) emulation control, microphone and headphone jacks, volume controls, game-control pads and mouse ports. So far, over 35,000 systems have been sold.

FM-Towns features one megabyte of RAM, one 3.5-inch 1MB disk drive and a built-in 540MB CD-ROM unit.

Fujitsu has not yet announced any release date for the personal computer in the U.S.

In a related story, Mediagenic has signed an agreement with Fujitsu, Ltd., of Japan to develop entertainment products for play on the FM-Towns. The first title available will be an FM-Towns version of *The Manhole*.

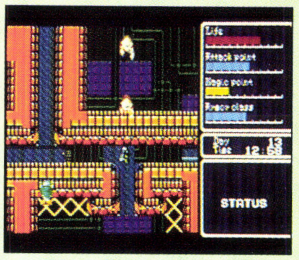


The Manhole is an exploration that covers over 600 interconnected rooms. The program starts with a view of a manhole that has a beanstalk growing out of it. The player can either descend into the manhole and explore an underground world, or climb up into the sky kingdom.

Various versions of *The Manhole* are also available for play on IBM and Macintosh computers.

Seismic to Produce Genesis, Master System Games





Seismic, Inc., will support Sega's game consoles with games designed for play on the 16-bit Genesis machine and the Sega Master System, according to a recent announcement by the company. The Santa Clara, California, firm plans to ship at least three titles in time for summer gaming.

The first of the trio is *Super Hydlide*, a role-playing

Coming Soon To A Screen Near You.



These hit games are on their way, with a whole bunch more right behind them. All with the fantastic color, great sound, and arcade graphics only Lynx can give you.

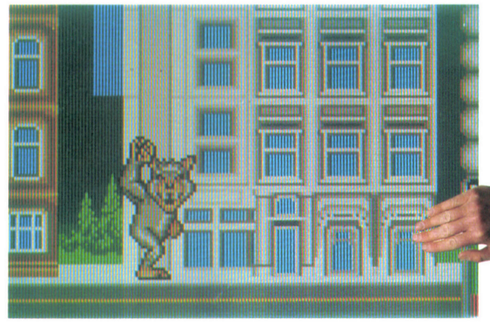
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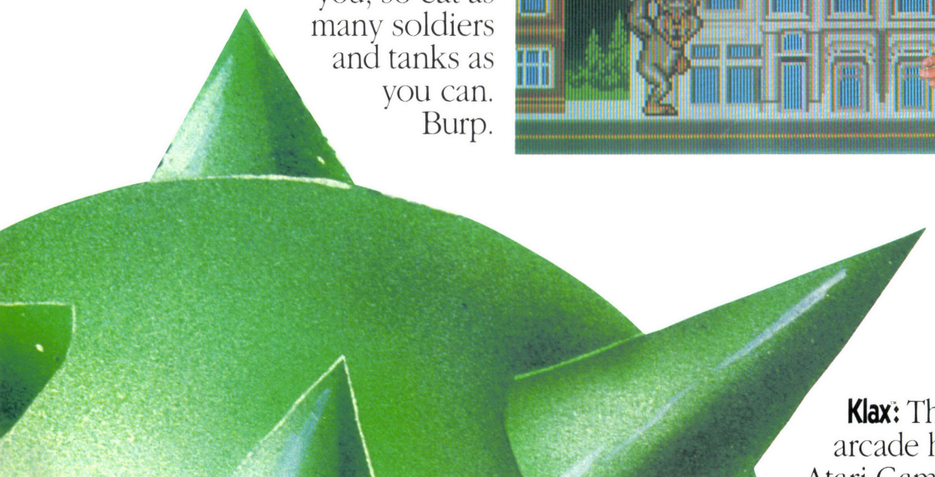
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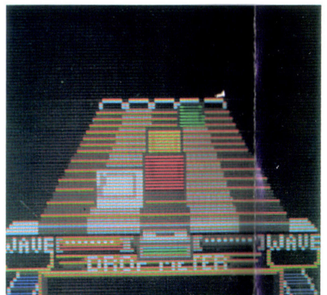
Rampage: You're a huge monster trashing 175 different cities. The army will try to stop you, so eat as many soldiers and tanks as you can. Burp.



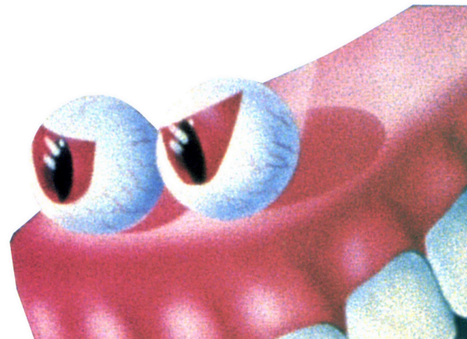




California Games: Welcome to California. Now get aggro. Surf your brains out. Skateboard the Half Pipe. Show fast footwork juggling the Foot Bag. Slam off the lip of desert berms on your BMX bike.



Klax: The latest arcade hit from Atari Games. You



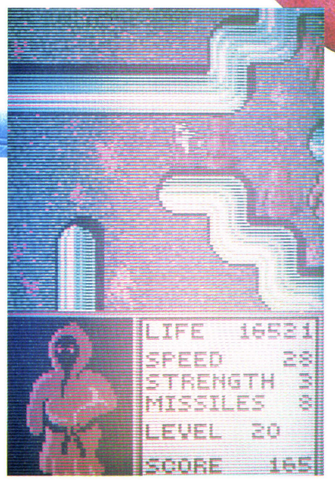
Chip's Challenge: Help Chip

must form "Klax" from colored tiles tumbling down the conveyor belt. 100 levels.

through 144 challenging levels without getting nailed by cherry bombs, water traps, and literally hundreds of other hazards.

Gates of Zendocon™: The hideous spider Zendocon has sent you deep into its web of 51 deadly universes. Survive each universe if you hope to return home.

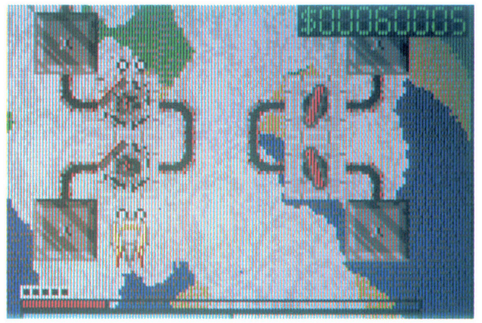
Blue Lightning™: You're flying the top secret Blue Lightning combat jet. But you have to survive missiles, ice fields, canyon walls and the dark of night.



Gauntlet™: The enchanted Star Gem has crashed to earth. Capture it from evil creatures before they use its magical strength to destroy man. 1 to 4 players.



Vindicators™: 2-player version of the Atari Games Arcade hit. Drive your tank through alien stations to find and destroy main control areas.



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Electrocop™: To rescue the kidnapped daughter of the president, you must invade the Steel Complex where evil robots and dangerous traps protect the Criminal Brain.

Xenophobe™: Four player version of the arcade hit. Aliens have infested the space stations. You lead an ill-equipped group of Astronauts to abolish the Alien Menace.

Game's Over, GameBoy.

Hey, sorry, GameBoy.™

But Lynx is the first full color portable game system. It has a large LCD screen with high definition SuperGraphics. (Not some yellow screen you can barely see)

Lynx has more power, for faster action, a deep level of play, and a link with up to four players. (As for GameBoy, well, you've played it.)

Try playing Lynx just once. That's all it'll take to leave your little boy games behind.

The Lynx Portable Video Game System.

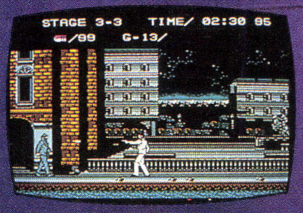
Lots of games are available on small cartridges, with more being developed as we speak.

8-way joypad for more control and more fun.

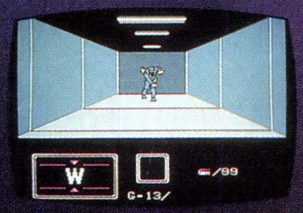
Just plug any standard headset into the Lynx to get more intense, realistic 4 channel sound.

Connect up to 4 Lynxes. On some games, all 4 players can be on screen at once.

An encore performance!







Golgo 13 is back in The Mafat Conspiracy! Top Secret Episode knocked the wind out of you; this one will blow you away!

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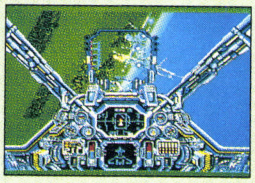
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action game. Players choose their character (warrior, thief, monk or priest), then fight with different weapons.



Air Diver is a first-person air combat adventure, featuring cockpit, heads-up display and eight levels of difficulty. Players can do barrel rolls and loops, use the afterburners and attack enemies with heat-seeking missiles, in a 4 Meg game that is said to take full advantage of the 16-bit graphics. (See reviews of *Air Diver* and *Super Hydlide* in *Video-Game Reviews* starting on page 38.)

R.C. Grand Prix is for the Sega 8-bit Master System. It boasts ten race courses. When the player wins races, the prize money can be used to upgrade the car with new battery, engine, tires or other speed-enhancing modifications.

Free Brochure Explains Batteries

Saft America has an informative brochure available free for the asking. Titled *One for All, All From One*, it contains a complete listing of all battery categories and descriptions of their applications.

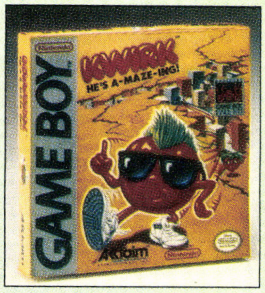


With the resurgence of electronic hand-held and other battery-using games and toys, a new line of specialized batteries has been introduced. To get a copy of the brochure, write SAFT America, Customer Service Dept., Portable Battery Division, 711 Industrial Blvd., Valdosta, GA 31601.

Game Boy Gets Classic Software Support

Three software companies have announced new titles for Game Boy, Nintendo's portable game system, including one that will make all veteran gamers smile with nostalgic glee.

It's true, a great game never dies: Taito has unveiled the Game Boy version of a venerable classic, *Space Invaders*. In this Hall of Fame





contest, gamers must blast away the marching aliens as they descend down the screen toward Earth.

Also from Taito is *Flipull*, a puzzler involving matching cubes, tricky patterns and 50 levels of play.

Acclaim has three new releases for Game Boy. First up is *Kwirk*, which stars a lovable hipster (a chilled tomato with a mohawk haircut) whose mission is to save his missing miss.

WWF Superstars features such WWF wrestlers as Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior and Macho King Randy Savage, in arcade action. When linked with another unit, players can compete in double tag-team matches.

Acclaim's third Game Boy title is *Wizards & Warriors X: Fortress of Fear*. This latest *W & W* adventure sends the knight-warrior Kuros into the forest of Elrond, through ruins, up to the clouds and into eventual confrontation with the evil wizard.

LJN, Ltd., has announced three new Game Boy titles. Now that LJN has been acquired, these games will be distributed by Acclaim. Titles include *NBA Basketball*, *The Amazing Spiderman* (licensed from the Marvel comic book) and *Beetlejuice*, based on the movie of the same name.

(See our "Game Boy Buyer's Guide," on page 24, for a complete rundown of all the Game Boy titles to be announced.)

Rad Lad DJ's Activision BBS

Mediagenic appointed a DJ to oversee the Activision BBS, a dedicated gaming bulletin-board system that gamers can contact for hints, sneak peeks at new games, contest information and general chitchat about gaming. The new DJ is responsible for maintaining the BBS and for dispensing information to the hundreds of players who contact the BBS each week for information about Activision products.

The bulletin board DJ goes by the nickname of "Rad"; he uses the handles "Radio Activision," "Radio Infocom" and "Radio Gamestar," depending on the brand discussed. Rad was born in Hackensack, New Jersey, but now lives in Silicon Valley, where he is active on GEnie, Delphi, CompuServe, Quantum Link, PC Link, America Online and Connect, in addition to the Activision BBS. Asked about his work as BBS DJ, the valley boy put tongue firmly in cheek to remark: "I coalesce the vapors of human technology into a viable and logical style." On the subject of gaming in



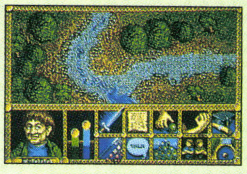
general, his statement is one that applies to many in the industry: "It's my life."

Players with a modem and standard communications software can reach Rad weekdays on the Activision BBS at (415) 329-7684.

Frodo Lives!

Interplay's newest role-player tackles the Tolkien trilogy with top-flight graphics, sound and a new play system that should make adventuring in Middle Earth more realistic than ever before. Frodo will indeed live again, with the most vitality the hobbit has had anytime since he sailed into the West.

The Lord of the Rings, already the inspiration for many electronic and non-electronic games, is the focus of the new software currently under design by Brian (*DragonWars*, *BattleChess*, *Neuromancer*, *Bard's Tale*) Fargo and the Interplay creative crew. The initial game in the planned trilogy of titles covers the first book, *Fellowship of the Rings*.





Players will view the action on a variety of screens that provide overviews, maps, closeups and an action panel with an overhead view of the surrounding terrain, a closeup of the fellowship member under control and a bank of picture icons representing options available to that adventurer.

The game should be ready for release in late summer and on retailers' shelves for autumn gaming. It will first be programmed for IBM and compatibles,

NEVER BEFORE HAS A FORCE OF ONE BEEN SO POWERFUL!



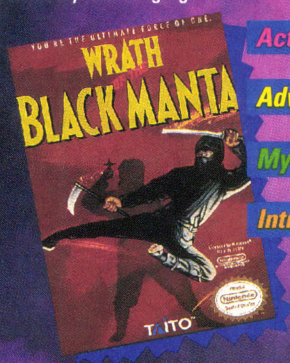
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Send for your FREE Black Manta poster today! Quantities are limited. Write to:
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Taito Software, Inc.
P.O. Box 1439
Bothwell, WA 98011

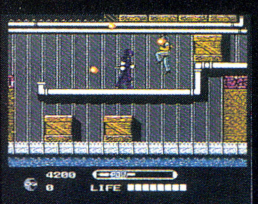


Action!
Adventure!
Mystery!
Intrigue!

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As Seen At The Nintendo World Championships 1990





Rated 4 out of 5 for graphics and sound, challenge and theme/fun on the Power Player Meter!

Nintendo Power, March/April 1990

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and shortly after for Commodore 64/128. Versions for other computer systems will follow later.

Sierra Brings Dynamix On-Line

Sierra On-Line and Dynamix, Inc., have signed a letter of intent, which will consummate this summer, to let the California company acquire Dynamix. Terms of the pending sale have not been disclosed.

Dynamix captured industry kudos with the introduction of "3Space," a three-dimensional modeling and display system. Dynamix's latest software hits, *A-10 Tank Killer* and *David Wolf: Secret Agent*, received critical acclaim for outstanding achievements in graphic presentation. (*David Wolf: Secret Agent* was voted Best Computer Game Sound and Graphics and *A-10 Tank Killer* won an Honorable Mention in the Best Computer Simulator category in VG&CE's *Best*





Games of 1989, [VG&CE, February 1990].)

Sierra president Ken Williams explained that the acquisition of Dynamix fits well into the strategic plans for the future of Sierra On-Line. "The Dynamix technologies not only provide superior entertainment products for today's computers," Williams began, "but offer a superior platform for the development of optical-based products for the next generation of computer systems."

Dynamix President Jeffrey Tunnell said the new relationship with Sierra is "a terrific pooling of talents. Through our work over the last months with Sierra (on 3Space licensing), we have found that our development practices and the marketing philosophies of our two companies are very similar. I believe the two companies will work very well together."

Current plans call for Dynamix to continue operating as an independent entity in its Eugene, Oregon, headquarters. Sierra will take over responsibilities for distribution of all Dynamix products, which includes *A-10 Tank Killer* and *David Wolf: Secret Agent*, as well as four new Dynamix products to be ready by Christmas.

BDL Denied License for NES Portable

We have good news and bad news. The good news is that BDL Enterprises, a Nintendo third-party accessory licensee and maker of the Turbo Booster for the NES, has developed a prototype of a color portable that plays standard NES cartridges.

The bad news is that Nintendo has seen the product, but has denied BDL a license to sell the unit at this time. "Though we invested a tremendous amount of time and money," Bruce Lowry, BDL's executive vice president told us, "we're willing to honor Nintendo's wishes that it not be brought to market at this point. We're strongly behind Nintendo's marketing strategy."

Lowry confirmed that BDL had developed the system, which contains a 4" color LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) screen and has stereo sound, but also features additional circuitry to make it more stable and durable. Lowry also noted that they've managed to boost the battery life to over 40 hours.

Apple Warranty Extended

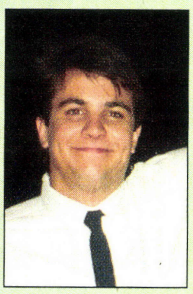
Apple Computer, Inc. has extended the warranty on all Apple products to one year, effective with all hardware products that were purchased since January 1, 1990.

Up until this announcement, Apple only offered a 90-day warranty. Customer pressure and computer-magazine lobbying has been credited for the change, which adds an estimated $30 million per year to Apple's operating expenses.

The new warranty applies to all Apple and Apple Macintosh computers, disk drives, printers and all related hardware items.

Game Counselor Dies in Crash

Word just reached VG&CE about a death in the electronic gaming industry.



Thomas Paul Grice, the well-known games master and counselor for Vic Tokai, was killed in a small plane crash on January 12, 1990. Tom was 21 when he died.

The accident occurred when Tom was on his way to a ski outing in Mammoth, California, accompanied by his father, Thomas Gregory Grice, and his best friend, Bill Telas, 25, both of whom also perished in the crash.

Tom was born in Hayward, California, but grew up in Bountiful, Utah. He attended Alta High School in Sandy, Utah. In the entertainment-software industry, he was best known as the author of *Tom's Tips & Tricks*, a regular column in the Vic Tokai newsletter.

Tom is survived by his mother, Arlene Elggren Grice, and several brothers and sisters.

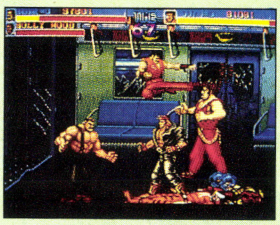
Top Coin-Ops of March 1990

Figures courtesy of *Replay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.



Best Upright Videos

1. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Konami
2. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
3. *Cyberball 2072* by Atari
4. *Beast Busters* by SNK
5. *Off Road* by Leland
6. *All American Football* by Leland
7. *Final Lap* by Atari
8. *Operation Thunderbolt* by Taito
9. *S.T.U.N. Runner* by Atari
10. *Midnight Resistance* by Data East



Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Final Fight* by Capcom
2. *WWF Superstars* by American Technos
3. *Badlands* by Atari
4. *Toki* by Fabtek
5. *Dragon Breed* by Irem
6. *Golden Axe* by Sega
7. *Shadow Dancer* by Sega
8. *Task Force Harrier* by American Sammy

You've got the strength. You've got the moves. You are the weapon!

The bone-crushing sequel to the original smash arcade hit, Renegade.

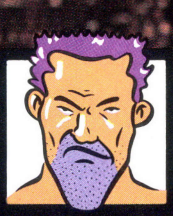




ACHILLES
All the charm of a used tire iron and a mean streak to back it up.



SIGGY
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BIG BOB
Look at him wrong and he'll pummel you into oblivion.

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9. *Caliber-50* by Romstar
10. *U. N. Squadron* by Capcom

Best New Uprights

1. *Winning Run* by Namco/Belam
2. *Klax* by Atari
3. *Metal Hawk* by Namco/Belam

Free Catalog for Mac Users

Educorp has a 288-page encyclopedia of software, hardware, CD-ROM products and accessories for Macintosh computers. To get a free copy, which includes over 7,000 program descriptions, call Educorp at (800) 843-9497.

What's Hot in the Land of the Rising Sun

Here are the top coin-op games in Japan during the month of February, courtesy of *Game Machine* magazine.

Top Cocktail Model Machines

1. *Final Fight* by Capcom
2. *Tetris* by Sega
3. *Bloxeed* by Sega
4. *Capcom World* by Capcom
5. *Shadow Dancer* by Sega
6. *S.A.R.* by SNK
7. *Super Formula* by Video Sys./Taito
8. *Super Masters* by Sega
9. *World Cup '90* by Tecmo
10. *Gradius III* by Konami

Top Upright & Cockpit Machines

1. *Line of Fire* by Sega
2. *Final Lap (Deluxe)* by Atari/Namco
3. *Big Run* by Jaleco
4. *Beast Busters* by SNK
5. *Winning Run-Suzuka GP* by Namco
6. *Four Trax* by Namco
7. *Super Monaco GP (Deluxe)* by Sega
8. *Final Lap* by Namco
9. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari/Namco
10. *S.C.I.* by Taito

NESer Sues Over Baseball Game

Clark Thiemann, age nine, has sued Nintendo of America, LJN Toys, Ltd., and Major League Productions, alleging that the baseball video-game cartridge he purchased for play on his Nintendo did not live up to his expectations. The Westport, Connecticut, gamer claims that the advertising and box copy for LJN's *Major League Baseball* contained untrue promises. He sued the three companies, seeking to stop production and sale of the game and asking for return of the $40 paid for the cartridge.

According to his father, Nick Thiemann, an attorney, Clark expected to be able to manage a team of real players and real teams. Clark says the game doesn't provide enough information for compu-managers.

Nintendo licensed the game for play, LJN manufactured it and Major League Baseball endorsed it; therefore the suit was levied against all three companies, under the Connecticut Consumer Unfair Trade Practices laws. The three companies will be defended in court by the same council. At a February hearing, Nintendo petitioned for removal of the case to Federal Court, which has jurisdiction in cases where over $50,000 is at stake.

The defendants had no comments about the case, and no trial date has been established yet.

Software Sellers for January

Here's SoftKat's list of last winter's best-selling entertainment disks, based on January sales.

Title/Publisher
F-19 Stealth Fighter/MicroProse
The Duel: Test Drive II/Accolade
Red Storm Rising/MicroProse
Jack Nicklaus' 18 Holes of Golf/Accolade
Vette!/Spectrum Holobyte
Midnight Rescue/The Learning Company
Leisure Suit Larry II/Sierra On-Line
Mean Streets/Access
Battle Chess/Mediagenic
Space Quest II/Sierra On-Line

Toy Company Cashes in on Mario

Playtime Products introduced a new line of Mario Bros.-based products at New York's Toy Fair. The Playtime line now includes such Nintendo-related products as Super Mario Bros. Cassette Recorder with Sing-a-Long Mike, Super Mario Bros. AM Radio with S.A.L. Mike, Super Mario Bros. AM Radio with Earphones and the Super Mario Bros. FM Radio & Headset.

In addition to the four audio units, Playtime also has flipper games based on the Nintendo heroes. Super Mario Bros. Triple Flipper Electronic Pinball boasts triple-flipper controls, digital scoring and a realistic playfield and backboard. Two new units are sized for smaller folks: Super Mario Bros. Shoot and Score and Super Mario Bros. Mario's Revenge are both target games that require the gamer to flip balls into the correct pockets.

The Playtime Mario Bros. units are all battery-operated.

Publisher Offers Free Try-Out Games

Scott Miller, president of Apogee Software, says he is firmly committed to the user-supported software market, and he's putting his games where his mouth is. Apogee's special "Try Our Software" offer provides a free packet to anyone who requests one before October 1990 and includes $3 to cover the cost of the postage, disk and handling. The offer contains instruction sheets and an IBM-compatible disk with two entertainment programs.

The Lost Adventures of Kroz is the seventh volume in the *Kroz* series, four of which were published in disk magazines. The player must survive 75 rooms of traps, creatures and other hazards, each with its own peculiar puzzle. There's a hidden message somewhere in the game, and the first 100 players to report it back to the company get a "Master *Kroz* Player" certificate.

Word Whiz, the second program on the free disk, is a quiz game that tests knowledge of the English language. Questions have multiple-choice answers, and the program is said to be suitable for use as either entertainment or education.

To order yours: Send a check or money order for $3 to Apogee Software, 4206 Mayflower, Garland, TX 75043.

EA Hits Video-Game Market in Force

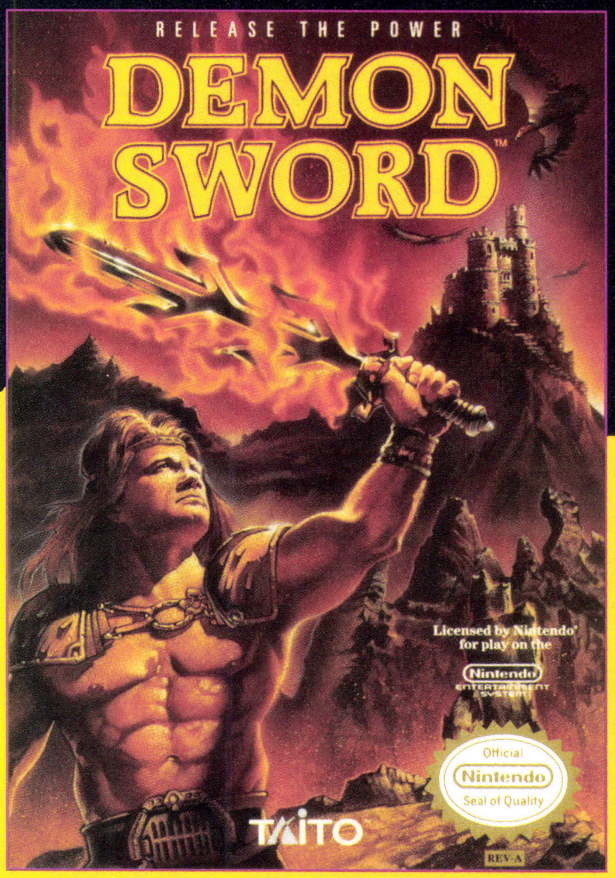
In late-breaking news, Electronic Arts and Nintendo of America jointly announced that EA has signed a licensing agreement to develop and market NES games. EA had only previously been involved in the NES market by licensing its products to others for development.

EA has already finished development of its first NES product, titled *Skate or Die 2*, under this agreement. This game is a sequel to the popular skateboarding contest for computers and the NES.

On May 15, EA also announced the introduction of three new video games on the Sega Genesis, two of which, in fact, should be shipping as you read this. *Budokan*, a martial-arts battle, and *Populous*, VG&CE's 1989 Computer Game of the Year, have June release dates. *Zany Golf*, the miniature-golf game that VG&CE voted 1989's Best Computer Sports Simulation, will come out in August.

We'll take a more in-depth look into EA's video-game development in our next issue.

MASTER THE POWER



IN A LAND OF IMPOSSIBLE EVILS . . .

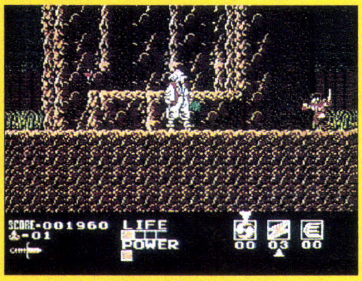
the classic struggle between good and evil comes to life. Mixed with magic and the latest computer technology, a spell-binding game for your Nintendo Entertainment System® is born!

As the hero warrior Victar, you will battle Wizards, Troglodytes, and Undead Souls. Master 7 levels and 3 worlds in your quest to conquer the demons of the Dark Lord. Traverse chasms of fire and mountains of doom to confront the fiendish Gatekeeper.

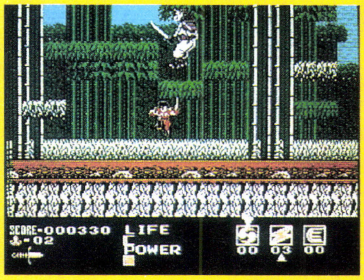
RISK IT ALL

With cunning and skill you wield the ancient and broken Demon Sword.™ To defeat the evil forces ruling the land, you must recover the Sword's missing pieces and restore its mystical power. The journey is long and the way is hard. Gather your courage, grasp your blade, and release the power that is yours to control!

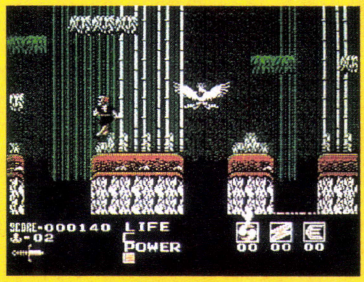
Actual Nintendo Entertainment System Screens



Beware the wrath of the Old Wizard of Cedar Mountain.



Brave the broken bridges and terrifying chasms of Bamboo Forest.



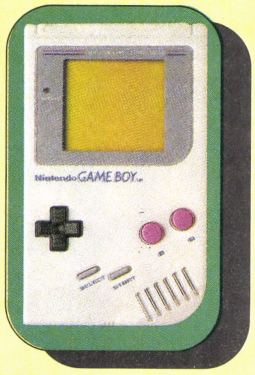
The magic of the Phoenix can save your life!

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GAME BOY



Buyer's Guide

by Marshal M. Rosenthal and Donn Nauert

Sadly, in the months subsequent to Nintendo's release of the Game Boy in America, only a few cartridges became available for sale. It took a while for any companies to make announcements on new Game Boy products, but now over 30 companies are producing carts for the Game Boy, with more licensees taking the plunge every time we look around. And we're not just seeing a lot of NES games being converted down to Game Boy format; many are brand-new games or versions taken from computer systems yet untapped by the NES system.

The software companies have been real champs in providing their games to us ahead of time. Sometimes that means we're working from a completed version that still needs tweaking [best case], and sometimes it's a version in progress that might change significantly prior to its release. In yet other cases we've been provided only information, as the games are too far off to have anything specific to look over. In these cases we've provided screen shots where pictures were available.

This buyer's guide isn't here to rate the games. Rather, this is a report of all the games that are or shortly will be on store shelves for Game Boy owners. With that out of the way, here is VG&CE's Game Boy Buyer's Guide.

Some photography © Marshal M. Rosenthal NYC.

Shanghai—HAL America

From HAL comes **Shanghai,** the classic Oriental game of matching tiles. With an almost endless number of variations of the playing board, this version allows playing both in the original mode (using mah-jongg tiles) or updated with English letters and numbers. There are up to four levels per game, each with five increasingly difficult stages to unravel. Add to that three background tunes from which to choose.

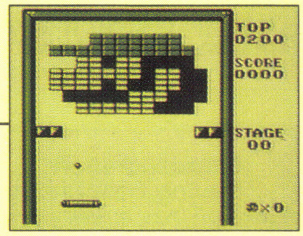


Alleyway—Nintendo

Alleyway goes **Breakout**, the stepchild of **Pong**, one better. Those familiar with Arkanoid already know what's happening, but those in the dark will experience the frustration that can only come from trying to bounce a ball endlessly against tiles, hoping to wipe them out. You've got a paddle at the bottom of the screen for this purpose, and it's up to you to hit the tiles overhead until the level is cleared.

The game begins with Mario running up and jumping onto the paddle. It would have been fun (and more creative) had it been our man going up against the tiles, but we're dealing with a small ball instead. When the ball eludes the paddle, another from the reserve is used. When all paddles are gone, Mario reappears then jumps down into the abyss.

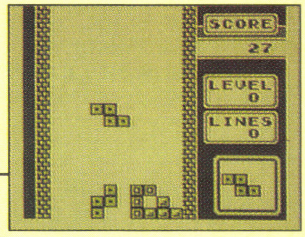
Upper levels get extremely complex—there are 32 levels in all—with intricate designs and unbreakable bricks that get in your way. As can be imagined, there are a few curve-balls tossed in; like horizontally scrolling tile sections, which increase the addiction, as you try to play through each level. Sound effects are basically pings and twangs, and the music is nondescript. It doesn't matter, though, because **Alleyway** is definitely a visual experience.

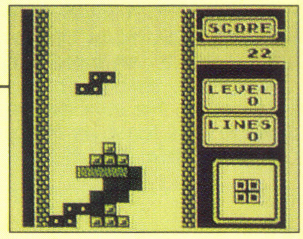


Tetris—Nintendo

Everyone who owns an American Game Boy knows **Tetris**, which comes free with the system. Most know the story behind it—a Russian programmer created it and it's the first computer game exported out of the USSR to really hit the big time. The idea behind **Tetris** is extremely simple: Seven geometric pieces fall down from above, one at a time, and the control pad moves them left and right while the buttons rotate them. The purpose is to create lines of blocks that will eliminate them from your screen, keeping them from reaching the top of the playing field. All the while you're being serenaded by one of three Russian folk songs.

Three games are offered: The first is for endurance, the second based on score and the final game is for two players using the Video Link cable. The last contest has completed lines going to the other player's screen!





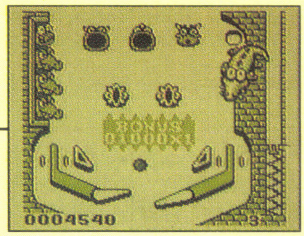
Revenge of the 'Gator—HAL America

In our book, there are only two kinds of people: Those who love pinball and those who don't know any better. HAL America's **Revenge of the 'Gator** satisfies the pinball aficionado with motion and sound, while providing exciting animation and tough challenges.

Four different games are programmed in: Games one and two are for single and two-player (alternating) games, while games three and four require two GBs hooked together with Video Link cables. After the ball is set in motion, the screen instantly switches to the top half of the "machine," where you have a set of flippers to keep the ball in play.

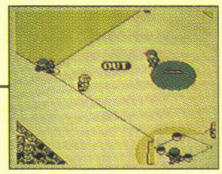
In true pinball fashion you can whirl and zip the sphere through lanes and bounce it off bumpers. A slot machine spins merrily when you zing through the loop lane, and there's a chance of activating a "drop guard," which keeps the ball in play on the upper half.

We would be remiss if we didn't mention the cute musical soundtrack—sorry, it can't be turned off—that accompanies the sound effects.



Bases Loaded—Jaleco

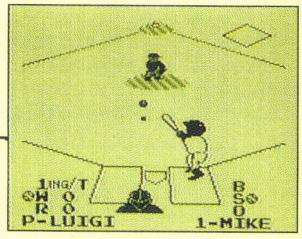
Jaleco is known for their pair of NES **Bases Loaded** games. This new Game Boy version will feature perspective shifts, so you view the ball from the position of the ballplayer you're controlling; quite different if you're the pitcher or outfielder. There are six teams to choose from, with 15 players per team. This game screams out for a two-player mode—and thankfully, it's there.



Baseball—Nintendo

Speaking of the national pastime, Nintendo's **Baseball** has got to be the most technically involved of their line. Consisting of two screens—the pitcher/hitter and outfield—you can choose between the American and Japanese modes, with the difference between the two consisting of radar-gun displays of the ball (in miles per hour versus kilometers) and your athlete's performance (U.S. pitchers are stronger; Japanese have more change-up control). There are four teams, two teams in each play mode.

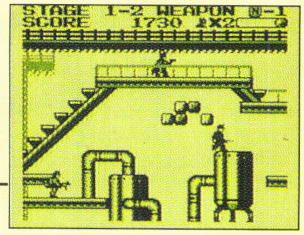
The pitching screen is nice and large, with a good-size batter and a catcher closest to the bottom. All the vital inning's information is displayed in the two lower corners, with a runner display at the upper right. The ball is well animated as it flies through the air; this also switches the display to the outfield screen. Control of the players uses an "auto" mode that selects the fielder closest to the ball, but then it's up to you to position him correctly.

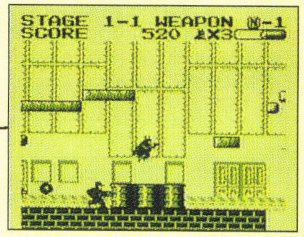


Batman—Sunsoft

Moving from hitting things with a bat to being hit by one takes us to **Batman**. Sunsoft has already produced an NES version, and the company plans to expand on Batman's popularity with the GB version. Yes, it's based on the movie, and Batman is again nicely animated as he runs, jumps and fights his way past a host of bad guys in pursuit of the Joker.

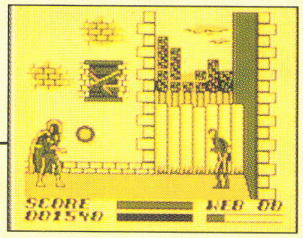
The four stages lead you through Gotham City, moving through the Axis Chemical Plant, the Flugelheim Museum and the finale at the Gotham City Cathedral. Along the way, Batman can pick up added weapons to augment his firepower, which includes being able to fire through walls. But we find the real fun is firing missiles from inside the Batwing.





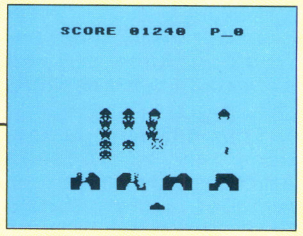
Spiderman—LJN

Mary Jane has been kidnapped, and it's up to the Webbed One to rescue her, which means taking on bad guys toting guns and bats, falling bricks and nasty vermin. Each level—some scrolling vertically rather than horizontally—has an arch-villain waiting at the end. Whether it's a jaunt through the mean streets of New York en route to an encounter with Mysterio or a battle on a moving subway car with the Scorpion, this is no picnic! But Spidey's no wimp. Aside from hard-hitting kicks and punches, he can fire web blasts at his foes and take to the air to escape or travel faster—at least as long as his web supply holds out. Some great touches: Kick a foe and see him fly off-screen.



Space Invaders—Taito

Taito's got the granddaddy of them all: **Space Invaders**, on a Game Boy cart. They've been out of action for a long time, but here come those bad-tempered aliens again. They drop from saucers overhead, march back and forth across the screen, and try to blow up your cannon while you take refuge behind bunkers and return fire.



Hatris—Bullet Proof Software

Another game written by **Tetris** author, Alexey Pajitnov, **Hatris** is an involving action/strategy game. Six different types of hats come falling from the screen in pairs and must be arranged in stacks by type. It may sound simple, but Hatris combines hats falling at different heights with increasing speed to drive you bonkers.



Miner 2049—Mindscape

Return to the platform jumping days of the past as the classic cart **Miner 2049** makes its presence known on the Game Boy. Leaping, jumping and fighting off the hideous aliens while collecting gold and points is all that counts here.



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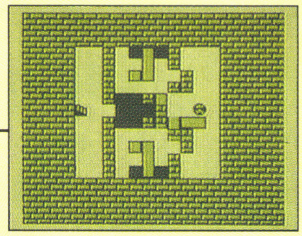
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Kwirk—Acclaim

We'd like to introduce you to Kwirk, the cool tomato—sort of the Jim McMahon of the vegetable world. It's up to you to move this fella with sunglasses and sneakers through a world of mazes, which requires shifting blocks into new positions in order to create spaces to travel through.

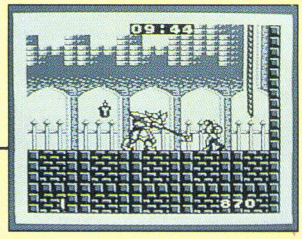
There are two different games, each with three difficulty levels and many "floors" to complete. Additionally, there's the choice of a diagonal or bird's-eye view of the little guy (the playfield remains the same). "Going Up" requires Kwirk to realign blocks in order to move freely from right to left. Time is also kept, as are the total steps taken to reach the stairs at the other end. The second game is "Heading Out," where there are smaller and more packed mazes and horizontal scrolling that takes Kwirk from the end of one "room" to the beginning of the next. There are even situations when a girlfriend appears and must be maneuvered around as well.

Kwirk is a lot like a Rubik's Cube: Planning and thinking ahead are important aspects. The game features smooth horizontal scrolling, special-effect wipes between scenes and a great musical score that's patently ridiculous.



Castlevania—The Adventure—Konami

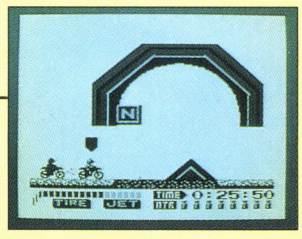
Sword and sorcery fans will be treated to **Castlevania—The Adventure**. You swing your sword through screens of danger, laying waste to all before you. Characters here are large. which is an asset.



Motocross Maniacs—Ultra

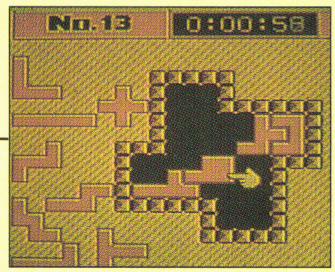
Motocross Maniacs lets you take a dirt bike over eight treacherous courses, each filled with bumps and obstacles. Along the way you can pick up six helpful objects: nitro turbo boosts, speed multipliers, radial tires and more. There's even some mini-maniacs hidden along the course—can you find them? If you do, they'll trail along for the ride.

It's either one player against the clock or you can compete against a computer-driven biker. Then again, you can choose the maniac mode, which pits you against another human via a Video Link hookup. Each course has three difficulty levels and a time limit.



Daedalian Opus—Vic Tokai

Tetris with a twist. Instead of placing blocks to form a line, you must now place blocks to fill a certain area. Use L-shaped, T-shaped and plus-shaped blocks to work your way through this challenging puzzle game.



Days of Thunder—Mindscape

Tom Cruise's summer movie, **Days of Thunder**, will make its appearance almost simultaneously on Game Boy. Take on the persona of a stock-car driver and drive for glory—and a kiss in the winner's circle.

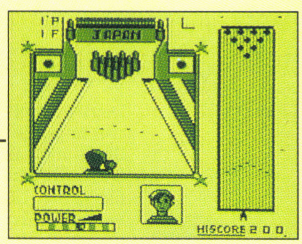


Gauntlet 2—Mindscape

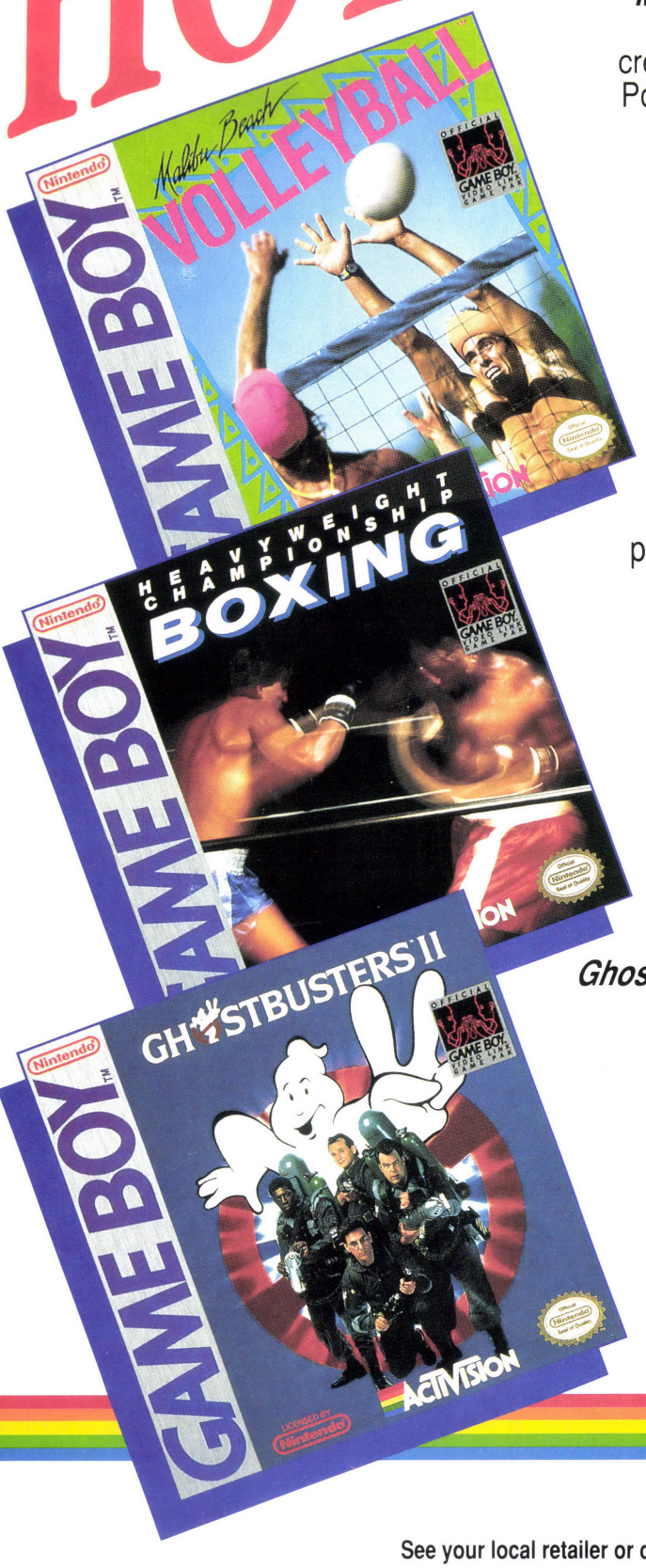
Dare you brave the unknown? If the answer is yes, then **Gauntlet 2** is for you. Take your favorite fighting character—warrior, thief and mage—into the thick of action, fighting off hordes of evil characters and acquiring potions, weapons and lots of money.

World Bowling—Romstar

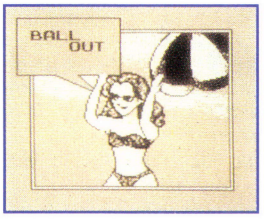
Put on those funky shoes and go **World Bowling**. Faithful to the NES cart, you've got a large area representing the alley. Your bowler can be maneuvered laterally as well as forward and back. Working the joypad builds up the "strength" of the ball, and the button release sends it on down to the pins. Good sound combines with fast-moving animation, but the standout is getting a strike and seeing the Bubba-type jump up and down as a pair of blond—or green in GB's case—cheerleaders rah-rah behind him.

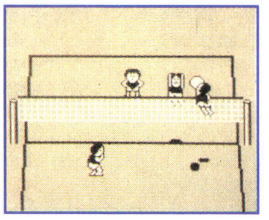


HOT GAME BOY ACTION!

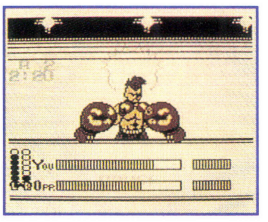


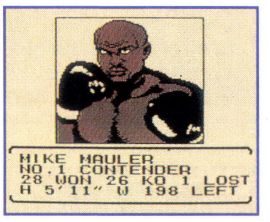
Malibu Beach Volleyball. Two-on-two sandblastin' volleyball, Malibu style. Set 'n spike against V-ball crews from 4 countries, each with different strengths. Power serves, "bulldozer" digs, and other cool shots.
1st and Only Game Boy Volleyball Game!



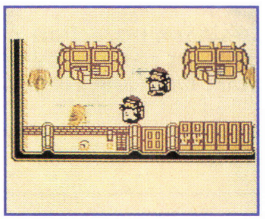


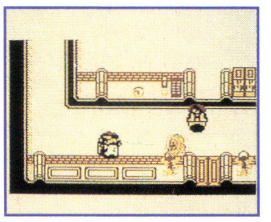
Heavyweight Championship Boxing. You've got hooks, jabs, uppercuts—plus a special knockout punch you select for each fight. Knockout, bash-'em boxing with 6 bad bruisers. 2 views of the action!
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GAME BOY

Buyers Guide

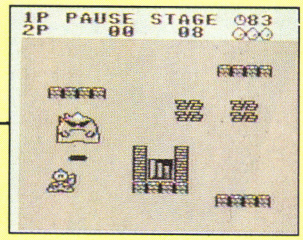
Wheel of Fortune—GameTek

GameTek proudly presents **Wheel of Fortune**, the popular game show brought to the Game Boy. Spin that wheel and watch those numbers rotate, bringing money, a free spin or bankruptcy while you try to decipher the phrase, name or title. If you've got the answer, you can take a guess. If you miss, you'll lose out on the valuable prizes displayed. All the while, watch the animated "Vanna" work those tiles!



Boomer's Adventure in Asmik World—Asmik

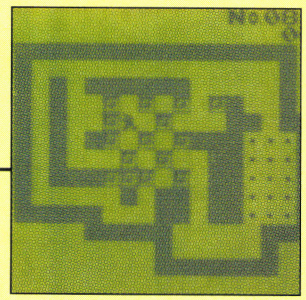
Help that lovable pink dinosaur Boomer defeat the evil dark lord Zoozoon. First find a way to get inside the ominous dark tower and battle the mutant guards. It won't be easy, because keys must be found for the eight different worlds, each guarded by evil bosses protecting the main key that Boomer needs to escape. Good thing there are boomerangs, bones and time bombs to use—plus a pair of roller skates to speed Boomer through the towers. There are many levels of intricate mazes. Two players can also hook together via a Video Link to try and free Asmik World together.



Boxxle—FCI

It's time for a sad tale: Poor Willie—his girlfriend demands gifts, which requires him to take up part-time work moving boxes around in grungy old warehouses. **Boxxle** is one of those quietly maddening games that's deceptively easy to understand, but horribly complex to execute. All you have to do is move the little boxes around until they cover the dots. The problem is doing this without getting stuck against a wall or having a box end up where it shouldn't be. Meanwhile every step taken is counted toward your total score.

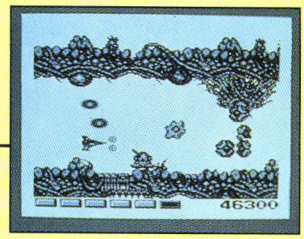
Possessing a jingle that bores into your gray matter and refuses to leave, **Boxxle** requires thought rather than reflexes alone. The player moves Willie against a box, which then moves in any free direction. The first few screens are tough enough, but it really gets hairy on the upper levels (these stages can, thankfully, be accessed through a password screen). Finally, a special option allows you to create up to three screens of your own, which can be stored in memory, letting you make large or small "warehouses" to befuddle others.



Nemesis—Ultra

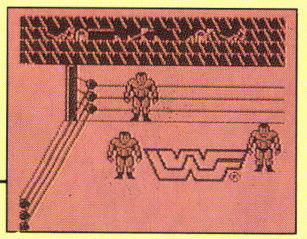
Nemesis places you behind the controls of a sleek spaceship, battling through horizontally scrolling landscapes, in pursuit of the evil King Nemesis. Enemy vessels attack in waves, as ground installations also add to the mix (in caverns you'll find trouble coming from overhead as well).

Plain-vanilla blasters are your only weapons at first, but destroying the opposition will materialize tokens that add firepower—one of the most useful is the rocket that simultaneously drops down as you're blasting ahead. It hugs the ground and takes out land-based sites. Five stages combine with two difficulty levels—and there are options like auto-shot, great sound and a much needed pause control. Control is simple: The A button does the firing, the joypad moves you anywhere on the screen.



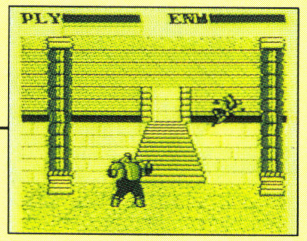
WWF Superstars—Acclaim

The head-butting, body-slamming action of the WWF comes to the Game Boy. Choose from eight of the biggest names in wrestling for singles or tag-team matches. This game features superstars like Hulk Hogan, "Macho Man" Randy Savage and the Ultimate Warrior.



Fist of the North Star—Electro Brain

Fist of the North Star pits you against a stream of big bosses in ten big brawls, fighting with all the karate skill you can muster. Normal mode pits you against the mighty enemy, while the "vs." mode lets you take on a friend using the Video Link tie. Team mode is a battle royale, as both you and a friend take on all the evil foes.



continued on page 34

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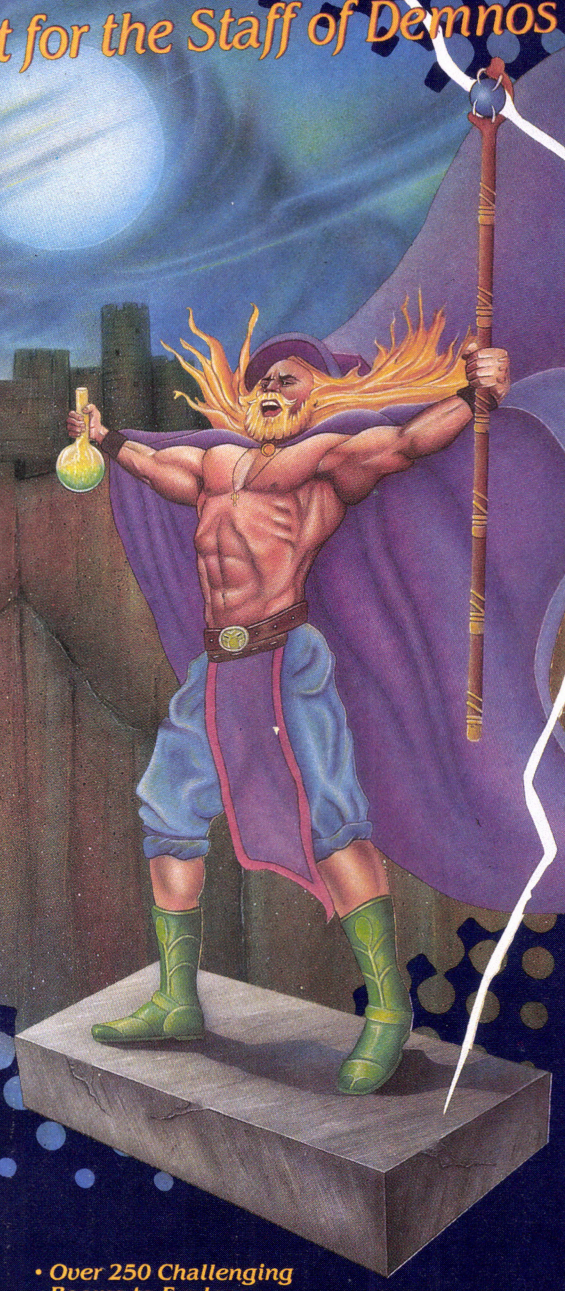
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Bases Loaded II
SECOND SEASON
Nintendo
Louisville Slugger

Dream Season.

Infielders dive for grounders in the hole. Outfielders crash into the wall to snare long drives. Sluggers take the curveball to the opposite field, or pull the inside fastball down the line.

In this game, you control it all, and much more. With special biorhythm/conditioning charts that give you the vital information you need to set your lineup. So you know when to pull a tiring starter. Or go to the bench for a hot pinch hitter.

It all adds up to a dream season for every game player who likes to use his head as well as his hands. So get into "Bases Loaded II: Second Season." At your favorite video game store now.









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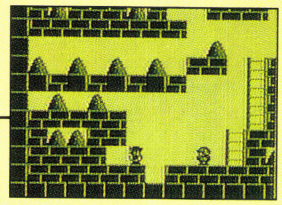
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Hyper Lode Runner—Bandai America

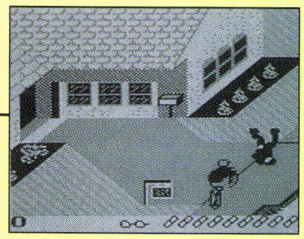
The old Brøderbund computer game, **Lode Runner**, has been brought up to date, only this time the Game Boy is the medium for **Hyper Lode Runner**. The year 2264 A.D. is a bad one for planet Earth. The renegade Red Lord of Darkness has descended with his cyborgs and taken over. Millions of prisoners are being tortured within the Labyrinth of Doom below the surface of the planet. Your mission: to penetrate these brick-wall catacombs and return with enough gold to finance the counterrevolution.

To succeed you'll have to run across bricks, hang from ropes and drop onto blocks while being chased by myriad marauders. Fortunately, you have the amazing power to disintegrate blocks before you, which lets you drop the bad guys down into a hole.



Paperboy—Mindscape

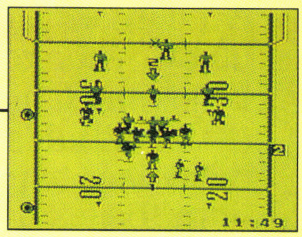
Time to start practicing your tabloid toss, and take to the streets as the paperboy. All the action of the arcade game can be found here, where you strive to make deliveries while being threatened by irate customers, automobiles, menacing dogs and more.



NFL Football—Konami

NFL Football takes all the action of the gridiron and puts it on the little screen, as you play against the computer or a friend. Pick from any of the 28 teams, decide strategies for offense/defense and take to the field. Arrows indicate who's handling the ball, and referees are on hand as well.

Figures are small, but well defined. Sometimes so many of them are on the field that it starts to get confusing, but fortunately a target cross appears to help indicate where the ball is tossed, and the vertical scrolling is nicely implemented. In addition, the sound effects, including ongoing music and the ref's whistle, are good. Strategy is part of the attraction here: Just as in real football, the action is not continuous. There are screens where you can plot the plays. There's nothing so frustrating as watching a play go bad, as an opposing player intercepts your pass and runs for a touchdown.



THAT CWAZY WABBIT

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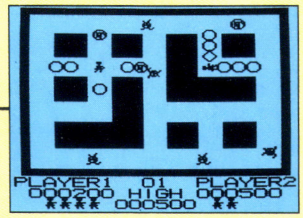
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GAME BOY

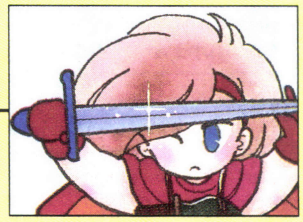
Heiankyo Aliens—Meldac

Heiankyo Aliens has the makings of a good "thinking" game—at least from the short glimpse we were able to see. This maze game played on a fixed screen is a port from the Japanese Famicom version. Maneuvering the hero through the checkerboard roads of Heiankyo enables you to create pitfalls to bury the aliens in. Simple to learn, easy to understand and maddeningly difficult to master.



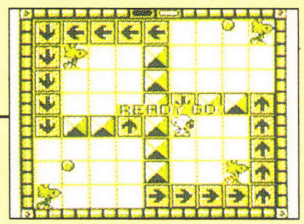
Monster Master—Sofel

Your mission: to battle the all-powerful ruler of the universe. You'll fight your way through forests, canyons and mountains, slaying evil demons, rescuing a princess and unearthing buried treasure.



Heart Attack—Kemco/Seika

Your job is to capture all the hearts so as to avoid heartbreak on the danger grid. Fifty levels of mazes include relentless death balls that strike at random while you try to stay on course and maneuver through landscapes with ever-changing barriers. Arrows along the pathway can supercharge your progress or throw you fatally off-course.



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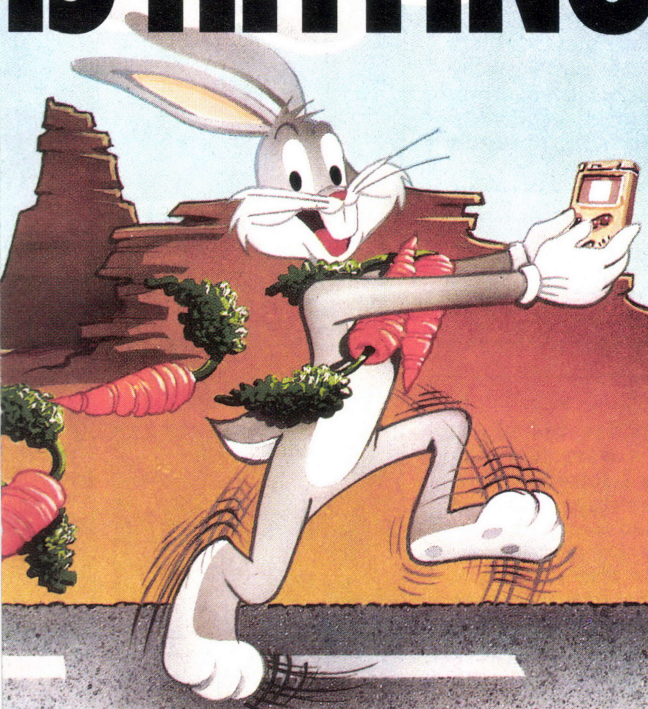
Carrots score points. Cargo crates and boxing gloves help fend off that band of wascals on your way to wescuing your kidnapped sweety.

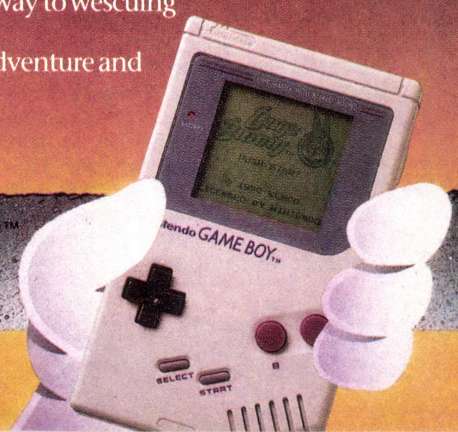
Bugs Bunny's Crazy Castle adventure and Nintendo Game Boy.

Zany fun, to go.

KEMCO▲SEIKA

THE BUGS BUNNY™ CRAZY CASTLE

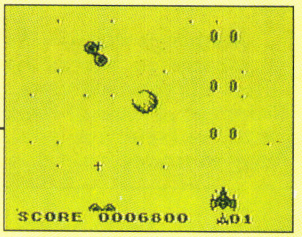




SolarStriker—Nintendo

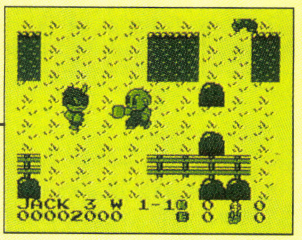
It's 2159 and Earth has been attacked by forces from the planet Reticulon. You, as pilot of the secret "ultra-performance fighter ship" SolarStriker, are mankind's last hope as you set out on a suicide mission to fly to the aliens' home planet and destroy its core, where the main computer is housed.

The game is of the vertically scrolling blast-'em-to-atoms variety. Your ship is free to move all around the screen, firing upward as enemies stream down from the top of the screen to make your life difficult (and short). There are six different stages and at least one "boss" waiting at the end of each. Your ship is not well armed at first, but it can increase its strength by flying over power-up icons as it fights its way through the swarming forces of the Reticulon Army, which includes Protodroids, Pinchers, Vexors, Anthrops and Miditrons, among many others.



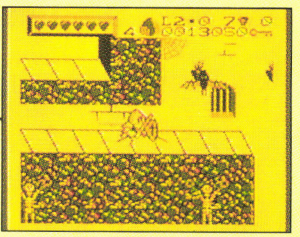
Kung-Fu Kid—Culture Brain

The king of comical Kung Fu shrinks down with Culture Brain's **Kung-Fu Kid**. Ported down from the NES, there are plenty of characters roaming through the villages to avoid—or fight! There are various strange prizes to acquire, like shoes that let you walk on water. And what would any game be without lots of enemies to fight? These are all wrapped up in 32 stages. The slightly overhead perspective makes it easy to view this game, and the various objects are quite readable. The NES version contains secret rooms and levels, and no doubt these will also be "hidden" in the GB version.



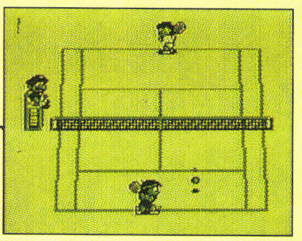
Wizards & Warriors X: Fortress of Fear—Acclaim

Wizards & Warriors X: Fortress of Fear continues the legend started by Acclaim with its NES carts. You must take the brave knight Kuros past castle ruins with deadly bats, deadly arrows and mysterious treasure chests. Help him slash and hack his way past slithering serpents and jump over chasms as he pursues the evil wizard Malkil. There are even times when he can travel on clouds. Along the way there are secret passageways to discover and magic spells to invoke. Large backgrounds make this an easy game to get lost in, and nice touches include an on-screen POW when the sword wacks a foe and a bemused-looking hero who has fallen on his rear when he leaps down from too great a height.



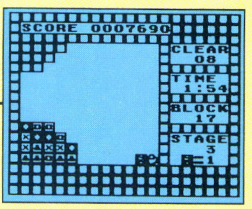
Tennis—Nintendo

Time to work up a sweat. **Tennis** gives us big graphics and also utilizes the Video Link cable, which allows two Game Boys to be hooked together for two-player games. Otherwise it's you versus the computer, with the computer commanding four levels of competence (each level also increases the speed of the ball in play). There's an opening scene as the two players come onto the court, sides are changed visually, little "bump" sounds are emitted as the ball hits the ground and the crowd roars. Scores appear in the corner, and fouls are highlighted by a closeup appearance of the umpire—who happens to be Mario, of course. It may not be Wimbledon, but trying to beat the computer on Level 4 is no joke!



Flipull—Taito

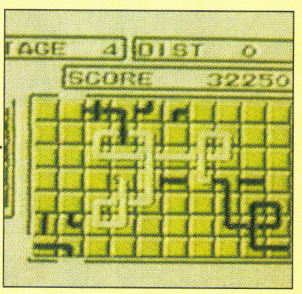
Flipull is another puzzle game, a popular genre for the Game Boy, that gives your brain a workout as a funny little blob battles against a mountain of blocks in a race against the clock.



Pipe Dream—Bullet Proof Software

As a career choice, plumbers seem to have it made. You work indoors, the pay is good and if you run into trouble, you can rap it on the head with a wrench. That's not the case with **Pipe Dream**, originally released for computers by Lucasfilm. Here you must build the longest possible continuous pipeline, staying many steps ahead of a stream of flooz, a chemical sewer-cleaning fluid that's doing its best to overflow.

Pipe pieces of various lengths appear randomly and must be quickly placed into position. They can't be rotated, but you can replace an existing piece that hasn't yet been filled by blowing up the old pipe and placing a new one on top. Provided that you can stay ahead of the effluent, the round ends once the counter empties of the total number of pipe pieces required. It's not over, though, because you'll soon find yourself on the next, more difficult level.



continued on page 68



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VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

Air Diver

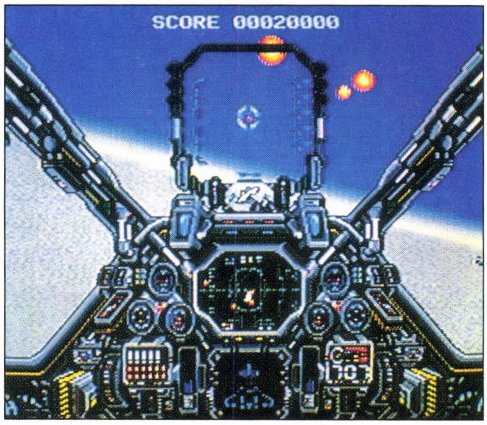
SEISMIC

For the Sega Genesis

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Gut-wrenching, thumb-busting fun was my first impression of what I'd get with *Air Diver*. This was my first glimpse at a third-party game for Genesis, but my pre-release copy arrived sans instructions. I was totally on my own. A "Top Gun" pilot of the F-19 Stealth Fighter, and I didn't even know how to start the engines!

All of the preliminaries were easily taken care of by the program. I didn't even have to take off or land. In fact, it was impossible to crash! I was occasionally able to perform a barrel roll, but for the life of me, I don't know what I did. Once it happened, I couldn't repeat it with any regularity, nor could I exact a 360-degree loop. I thought that maybe these features were only applicable to higher levels of difficulty. No such luck! A player is relegated to maneuvering left/right and up/down with severe limitations that would barely allow the horizon line to deviate more than a few inches from center screen.



Seismic's *Air Diver*, one of its first efforts for the Sega Genesis, gives you a first-person perspective of the aerial dogfight you've found yourself engaged in.

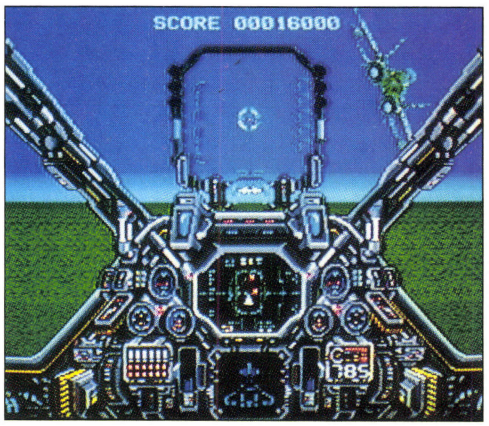
If Genesis players expect more of an arcade contest, like *Afterburner*, instead of a complete flight simulator, they may be pleasantly surprised by *Air Diver*. As an arcade-style air-combat game, *Air Diver* really delivers. Unlike home-computer flight simulators that use line drawings to represent targets, *Air Diver* features excellent, highly detailed sprites, depicting actual aircraft. They skim the sky at mind-boggling speeds, all the while utilizing the Genesis' sprite-scaling functions to move accurately through the game screen's three-dimensional perspective.



Button A fires your cannons a burst at a time and is much less effective than using your heat-seeking missiles, which are fired after locking onto a target by pressing Button B. When a target is destroyed, it erupts in a ball of flame and debris. Button C is engaged in the afterburners for that burst of speed that might make all the difference in a dogfight.

Now, if only a reviewer could look past the lack of imagination in the background scenery and some of the disappointing sound effects that add up to not much more than white noise. The real puzzle is why some of the effects overlap and cancel each other out. With 13 voices to play engage, it seems that this shouldn't happen in a Genesis game. Perhaps it stems from the priority placed on the stereo music, which (in order to preserve the sound effects) can't be toggled off.

Even if the above could be overlooked, other points cannot. For one thing, this game doesn't really possess progressive



levels of difficulty. Every scenario seems to be next to impossible to beat! You wipe out every fighter and find one super fighter that must be hit more than once—just let it get past you, and you're dead. No maneuvering can shake it from your tail, not even in the easy level! If you get a few lucky hits on this sucker, you then face a "mothership" that is straight out of a Cracker Jack box! Not even a real airplane—just a big, silly-looking thing that floats around a blank screen and takes potshots at you!

I hope for a better effort on the part of Seismic next time around. It seems to have a handle on the Genesis hardware, but all it needs is a bit of refinement and to find what makes a game compelling and enjoyable, instead of an exercise in frustration.

—Frank Eva

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The Mafat Conspiracy

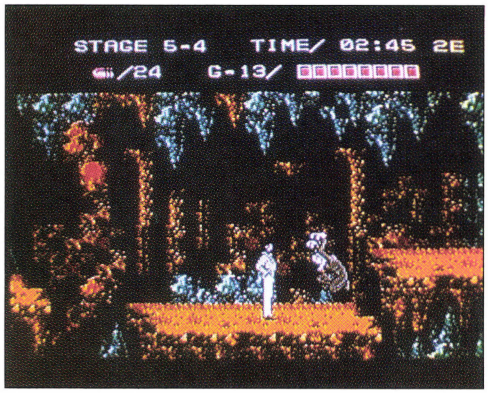
VIC TOKAI

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($42.98)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

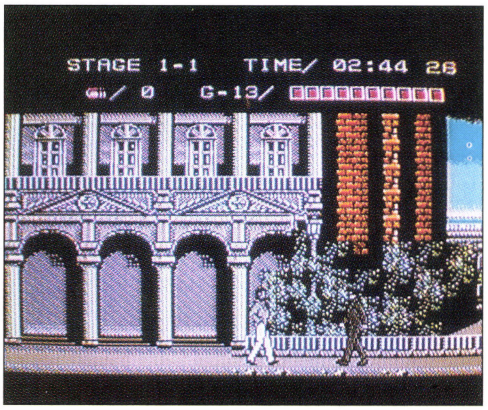


Assassin Duke Togo (a/k/a Golgo 13) is currently one of Japan's most popular comic characters. Created by writer/artist Takao Saito nearly 20 years ago, Golgo 13 has been the subject of a long-running series of graphic novels and at least one full-length animated motion picture. Vic Tokai's *Top Secret Episode*, a 1988 NES cartridge featuring Golgo 13, was a successful "cult" hit and is still one of the best NES games I've ever played.

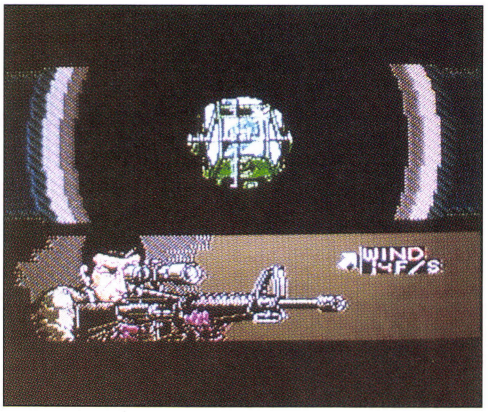


Duke Togo, the star CIA agent from Vic Tokai's *Golgo 13* popular video game, has taken another top-secret anti-terrorist mission in *The Mafat Conspiracy*.

The Mafat Conspiracy is an all-new adventure involving Duke Togo's CIA-directed attempts to find and dismantle the Mafat Revolutionary Group. The Mafat Group, a mysterious terrorist organization, has claimed responsibility for the recent destruction of an experimental American satellite and threatens to do so again unless the U.S. coughs up a nuclear missile-equipped submarine. Most of the action takes place against various horizontally scrolling backgrounds, as Golgo 13 jumps, kicks and shoots his way through a constant stream of assassins.



It's obvious that the game's programmers have made a conscious attempt to improve certain aspects of the original *Top Secret Episode*. Unfortunately, many of these details would have been better left alone. For example, the background graphics are much more detailed and colorful. Unfortunately, there are several points in the game where you jump right off the screen because part of the background looks like a platform that you can stand on. Similarly, Duke's appearance has been refined. Even his trademark sideburns are visible during the side-view street scenes. Regrettably, the new Golgo 13 has also acquired more refined mannerisms: Even when being attacked from all angles by homicidal Mafat agents, he seems perfectly at ease, sauntering smoothly down the street with his hand tucked in his pocket.



Other problems are less apparent, but perhaps more serious. The "B" button fires Duke's gun—but in the first-person maze scenes, the gun is controlled by the "A" button. When Golgo 13 is in the mazes, his moves result in abrupt jumps from one viewpoint to the next. In a long corridor uninterrupted by doors or connecting hallways, it's possible to move forward several "spaces" without any change in the screen's appearance. There is a small "click" to acknowledge the fact that you've gone forward, but it's certain that NES owners who are hearing-impaired or simply don't play in absolute quiet will find mapping difficult because of the seeming lack of movement on the screen.

Conversely, some of the other new features are really exciting. The "sniper" sequences, which feature a view through the scope of Duke's rifle as you line up your shot, are much improved. A picture of Golgo 13 aiming his weapon is displayed beneath the crosshairs, plus, there's a wind speed/direction indicator that must be considered if your shot is to reach its target. A *Rad Racer*-type driving scenario is also included, featuring a view of Duke's red Ferrari that you maneuver past enemy vehicles.

Unlike the uniform face-to-face "conversation" scenes of the previous game, *The Mafat Conspiracy* features dynamic, movie-type intermissions like those seen in Tecmo's *Ninja Gaiden*. Generally these sequences are well done, but they tend to get bogged down by extensive, slow-paced dialogue and extremely repetitive music. One particularly lengthy encounter occurs less than two minutes into the game. By the time you've moved on to the next action scenario, the game's pacing has been badly disrupted. You can skip these scenes if you'd like, but the information received therein is important for those who choose to follow the game's complex storyline.

Sadly, *The Mafat Conspiracy* does not meet the standard set by the original *Top Secret Episode*. It's not a bad game by any means, but considering the excellence of other recent NES-game sequels, I expected much, much more.

—Chris Bieniek

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RBI Baseball 2

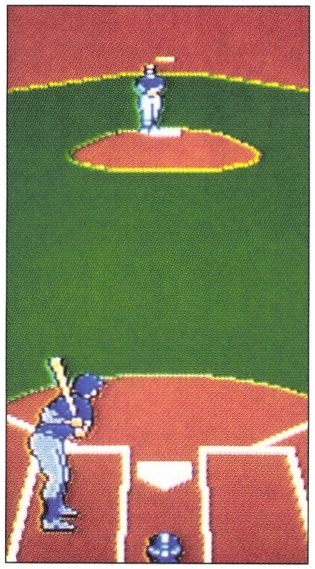
TENGEN

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Hitting, pitching, running and sliding—it's all in *RBI Baseball 2* from Tengen. In this sequel to the original *RBI*, one can choose from any of the 28 teams in the league and play either head-to-head against another person or versus a computer opponent.

Most every aspect of the real game is included in this version: stealing bases, picking off runners, errors, switch hitting and substitution of both pitchers and hitters to name a few. Up to ten innings can be played, and a password feature enables one to continue a series whenever convenient. The players are real, not made up—a Nolan Ryan express or Jose Canseco knocking one into the stratosphere will convince any skeptic. Batting averages are shown for each player, as well as ERA information for the pitching staff of each team.



Tengen's *RBI Baseball 2*, yet another video-baseball sequel, includes most every aspect of real diamond action: stealing bases, picking off runners, player substitutions and digitized umpire calls.

Realism is the key to sports simulations, and *RBI 2* is faithful in most every respect. The computer isn't perfect and makes the same mistakes the player may make: dropped flies, badly thrown balls or poor pitches.



With two difficulty levels for computer play, both novice and expert players can challenge the many teams in order to bone up on the strengths and weaknesses of their players. Each pitcher has certain specialty tosses he favors, and fatigue may take its toll if he overpitches. Three pitching speeds, plus curves, sinkers and change-ups provide plenty of batting challenge. Up to five pitchers may be inserted throughout each game,however, so some strategy is required.

A team's starting lineup may be altered as well by substituting bench players for infield or outfield positions—even the catcher. One unavailable option is assembling one's own team, which would have made an interesting addition.

The batting averages seem to actually affect a player's batting ability; players with lower averages don't appear to wield the power that players with a more impressive average have. If a player has switch-hitting capabilities, the change is easily made. The players are simple to control in all aspects of the game: running, stealing bases, throwing, jumping or even diving to retrieve the ball. Most important, the scores stay realistic. Don't expect any 45-17 blowouts playing the computer! The only negative that really stood out was the lack of an infield-fly rule, although the computer will prompt a player to be sure and "tag up" during a pop fly.

The background music, which consists of the opening anthem and traditional baseball themes, along with the "Strike!" or "Out!" calls made by the umpire, helps establish the proper game atmosphere. The player's on-screen representations are more lifelike than in the original and are smoothly animated. During pitching and hitting sequences, the point of view is from the batter's perspective, so both batter and pitcher may see all four bases.

RBI Baseball 2 should whet the appetite of both baseball fanatics and casual enthusiasts. Realistic game play makes this a good addition to any sports library, and there is enough variety to keep it interesting from game to game. *RBI 2* is a solid contribution to currently available baseball games and comes recommended.

—Brent Walker

Tengen
1623 Buckeye Dr.
Milpitas, CA 95035
(408) 435-2650

Target: Renegade

TAITO

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

Target: Renegade, the sequel to Taito's earlier success, *Renegade* is a disappointment. It's just another sequel that is not as fun—or as good—as its predecessor.

The scenario is quite easy to grasp. Because you were victorious in the first adventure, Mr. Big has kidnapped your brother—it's your job to save him. The action takes place in a multilevel complex set in urban sprawl—the "bad part" of town, so to speak.

To stop you, there are lots of Mr. Big's henchmen to take on. On the first level these thugs attack on motorcycles and

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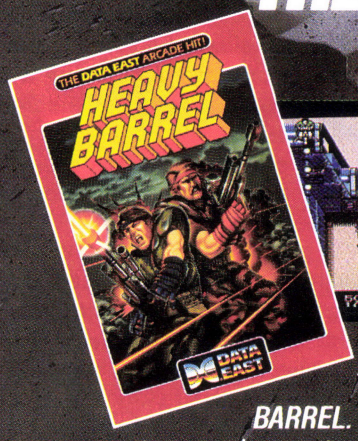
HEAVY BARREL

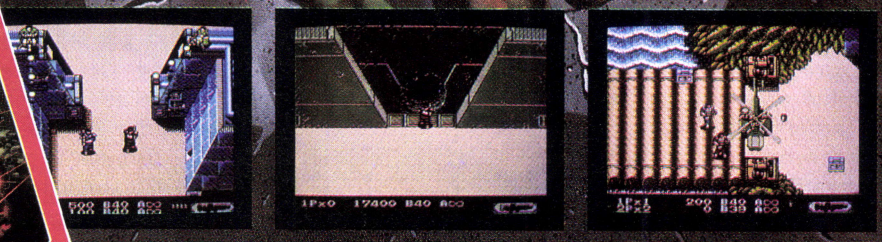
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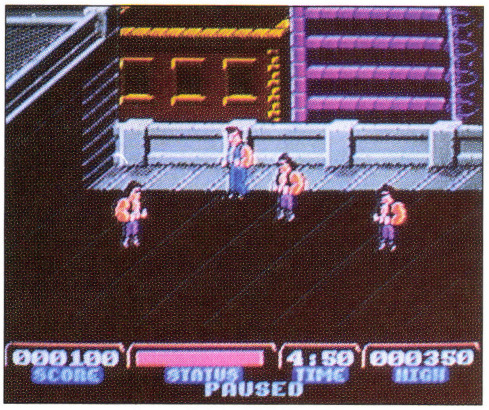
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CIRCLE #121 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

must be kicked off. From there you proceed to perform the usual fight moves: Punch the bad guys, kick 'em in the head, in the midsection and in the legs. This continual abuse eventually brings them all down. And, as always, if they do you the same honors, your status line goes down. Once it disappears, your game ends. Start over.

Taito's *Target: Renegade* updates its intense combat game, *Renegade*, with more martial-arts action as you take a tour through the "bad side" of your town in search of Mr. Big.



At the end of every level waits the big, tough guy—the toughest of the tough—you must make mince of in order to progress to the next level. There's always one certain way to defeat this guy, as you probably know, and it's up to you to find out how.

Every now and then, a fallen enemy will leave a heart behind—a heart icon that is. Retrieving these will replenish your status line. But you can't simply pass your man over the icon—oh, no. The programmers had to make this game "challenging." You must crouch your on-screen player down over the heart and press the "A" button. As you try to do this maneuver as effortlessly as possible, Mr. Big's villains have a field day pounding you to a pulp.



It's unfair to directly compare a sequel to its predecessor, but *Target: Renegade* invites it. A number of fight moves that could be done in *Renegade*, such as grabbing the enemy and throwing him over your head or punching him in the face while he's down, simply can't be performed in this sequel.

What's more, the graphics are a letdown. In fact, one would probably argue that the graphics in *Target: Renegade* are actually worse than the original's. This sequel lacks the interesting and variety-filled play scenario of *Renegade*. There is not much to do here other than kick the daylights out of people.

Also, the way the enemy is depicted is questionable. On the second stage, you beat up shapely women who attack by hurling what looks like a parking meter at you. In *Renegade* there were large, purse-wielding females, yet many people didn't raise a brow. *Target: Renegade*'s portrayal of your player attacking these ladies, though, is, frankly, quite disturbing. It adds fuel to the fire of the snowballing sentiment that video games are nothing but violent and sexist.

For the experienced player, *Target: Renegade* will hardly offer a challenge. For the novice, the playing controls prove to be frustrating. *Target: Renegade* appears to exist for one sole purpose: to cash in on the popularity and success of the original—nothing more.

—Howard H. Wen

Taito Software, Inc.
267 West Esplanade
North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7M IA5
(604) 984-3344

Bad News Baseball

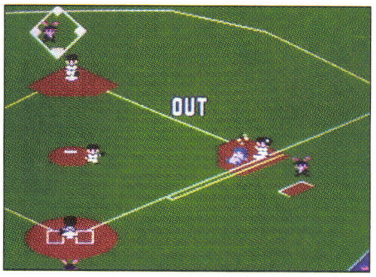
TECMO

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.99)

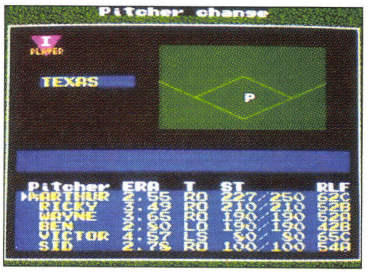
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Ever since Nintendo released their *Baseball* cartridge in 1985, there's been a lot of competition amongst several third-party software developers, each trying to come up with the "best" NES baseball title. Let's face it: Unless you're extremely wealthy, you probably can't afford to have nine baseball cartridges in your collection. So which one is most realistic, most challenging, most faithful to America's favorite pastime?

Ironically, *Bad News Baseball* may have won that competition—by choosing not to compete. Unlike many recent entries, which place a heavier emphasis on statistics and realism, *Bad News Baseball* features kids of Little-League age who have been let loose in a full-sized stadium with professional uniforms and equipment. Detailed stats are available on all the players for those who are interested, but the key idea here is "fun."



The game play is similar to many earlier baseball titles, including Tecmo's own *Tecmo Baseball*. The catcher's view is shown during each pitch, and the screen switches to an overview of the field if the batter connects. The players are all drawn in the tradition of Japanese "manga," with large heads and round, expressive eyes. This is one game that's not ashamed to be cute! A special "girls" option changes all the players into females, with long hair and short pants.



Tecmo's *Bad News Baseball* is filled with humorous bits of animation, comic touches and a "girls' mode," in addition to the exciting baseball action.

Each game is loaded with humorous bits of animation and comic touches. Whenever a batter is thrown out at first base, or if a fly ball is caught, the batter falls on his rear end in surprise as stars fly

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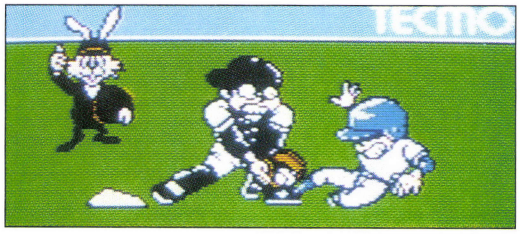
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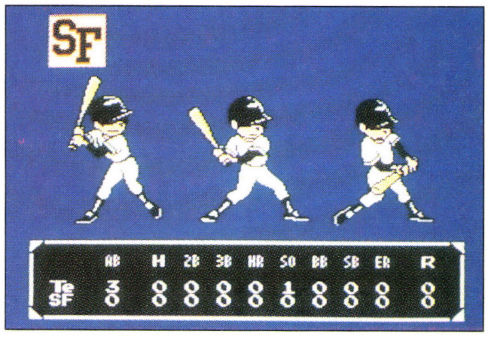
Al Unser Jr.'s Turbo Racing:
© and ™ 1990 Data East USA, Inc.

around his head. If a batter is hit by a pitch, his eyes bulge out and spin around in two different directions.

One of the most innovative features of *Bad News Baseball* is the "zoom-up" screen, a special first-person view of close plays and home-run celebrations. When a runner tries to steal second base, you might be treated to a quick cartoon-quality sequence showing the results of his efforts. You'll see a close-up of the runner sliding head-first in a cloud of dust and base-path chalk, with sweat trickling off his brow as he grits his teeth in determination. Then there's a shot of the second baseman extending his glove to receive the catcher's throw and finally, a side view of the tag, as the digitized voice of the umpire calls you out!







Among the nicer aspects of *Bad News Baseball* is the animation that takes place when there is a close play at a base, which helps to show you the final result.

Other "zoom-up" segments show the after-effects of home runs: The batter's victory trot, the response in each team's dugout or even the congratulations of your teammates as they line up for a high five. (But who is that Mr. T clone at the end of the line?) If a ball is hit out of the park, you'll see its smiling face as it leaves the Earth's orbit and rockets through star-studded space.

On the downside, the view of the field when the ball is hit is rather primitive. The players are small and sparsely detailed, and the spectators all have Beatle haircuts. Also, when are Japanese game designers going to realize that baseball just isn't the same without such American traditions as the National Anthem or the seventh-inning stretch?

Flaws and all, this adds up to a fun, lighthearted look at a sport that's been done a hundred different ways on a dozen different systems. Not everyone will appreciate the cartoonish quality of the graphics, but that's exactly the reason why this game stands out from the crowd of NES baseball titles.

The players in *Bad News Baseball* look like a bunch of kids having a good time. Isn't that what baseball is all about?

—C. B.

Tecmo
Victoria Business Park
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Carson, CA 90746
(213) 329-5880

Psycho Fox

SEGA
For the Sega Master System
($29.95)

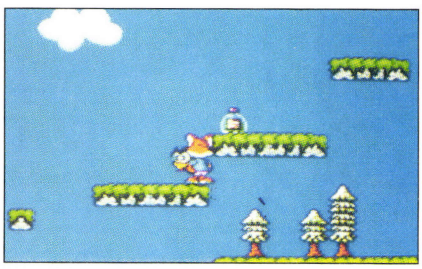
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

It's gratifying to see that Sega is still providing a wave of new games for the Sega Master System. This is welcome relief to the thousands of SMS owners who may have heard that Sega was dropping the system in favor of the Genesis. It would have been laudable to report that *Psycho Fox* will give the SMS a needed boost, but the sad truth is that *Fox* is an imitation of *Super Mario Bros. 2*. Though there are some cute elements, and although the game is very challenging, it reveals precious little imagination.

The plot is rooted in Japanese culture and centers on the fox deity, Inari Daimyojin, who is worshiped at harvest time. One deity, Madfox Daimyojin, has conquered a country and proclaimed himself to be its evil ruler. You play the role of Psycho Fox, chosen to travel through the countryside and to do battle with Madfox. Naturally, the country is full of the Madfox's evil creatures, each of whom you must either avoid or defeat. There are seven areas to negotiate; Madfox lies at the end of the seventh area.

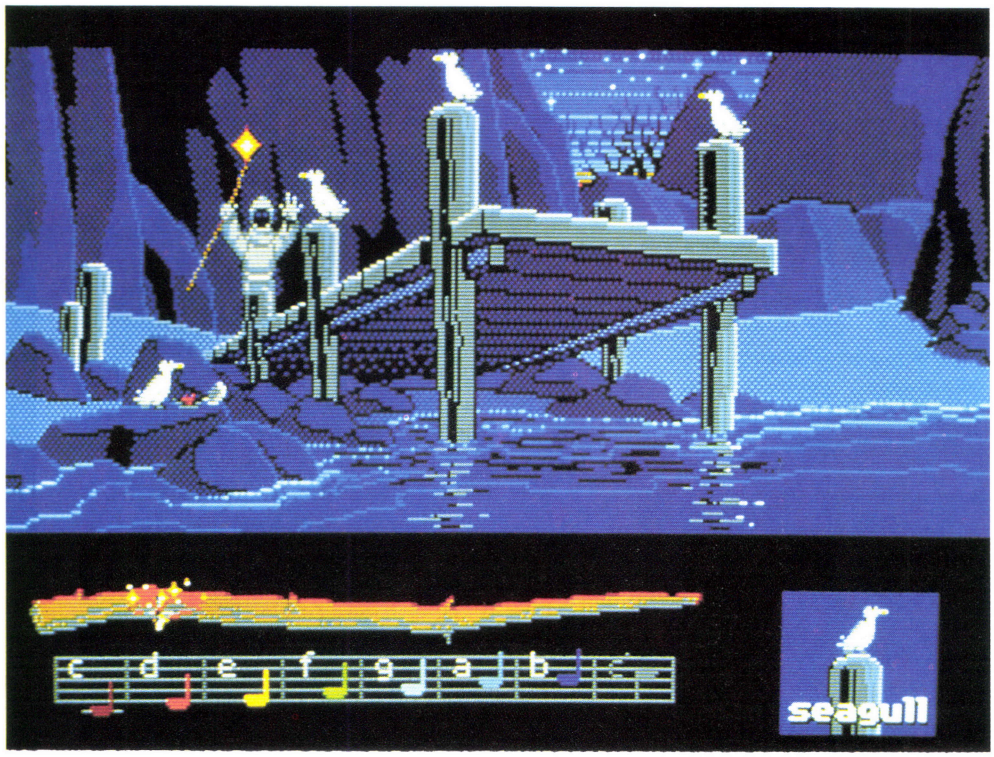
In typical *Super Mario Bros. (SMB)* fashion, you guide your fox across horizontally scrolling terrain, squashing enemy creatures or punching them or avoiding them. There are at least two ways to travel: in the sky (by jumping on blocks) or over land.





Sega's *Psycho Fox*, for the Master System, draws its plot from ancient Japanese culture.

Depending on the area you're in, the terrain will change to make your mission more difficult. Desert sands are tough to traverse (have we seen this before?), ice is slippery (it's looking awfully familiar), strong winds will blow you off balance. You can convert from one type of animal to another; the result is very much like choosing different characters in *SMB:* the abilities of running, jumping and punching all change. You'll have to determine through trial and error which animals are appropriate for each situation.



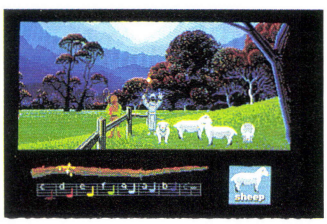
The game is fantasy. The interface is magic.

Alone on a craggy hilltop, high above an island shrouded in perpetual mist, your quest begins. But tread gingerly, because while the world of *Loom*™ is breathtakingly beautiful, unspeakable danger awaits the unsuspecting.

Trepidation soon gives way to bravado as you peek inside abandoned tents in the village. Stumbling over a discarded weaver's distaff, you watch in wonder as it gradually glows and resonates with a sequence of musical notes. Tentatively at first, you point the staff and repeat the notes. After considerable experimentation, you may discover the power to see in the dark. Or weave straw into gold. And eventually find the means to leave the island itself.



Not all the Guilds welcome strangers.



A spell weaver's power is not for the sheepish.

A fantastic odyssey ensues, as menacing waterspouts, merciless dragons and exotic cities draw you deeper and deeper into the fantasy. Armed with the distaff's magic power, you stride fearlessly across vast, cinematic landscapes. Seeking the arcane knowledge possessed by the Great Guilds, accumulated and refined since the dawn of time.

Typing is banished from this kingdom.

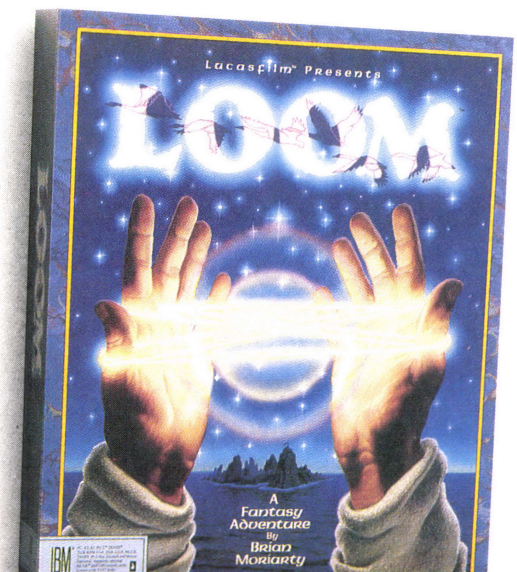
Loom is more than a masterpiece of fantasy storytelling. With *Loom,* Lucasfilm™ Games literally redefines the fantasy computer game experience. Simple point n' click actions move your character, select objects, and perform magic. No cumbersome keystrokes, text parsing, maze mapping, or inventory management intrude to break the spell.

We even transport you to the Age of the Great Guilds before you turn on the computer. With a lavishly produced, 30-minute drama on Dolby® Stereo audio cassette that's included with the game. Recorded by Lucasfilm's Academy Award-winning Sprocket Systems, it introduces the characters and sets the scene for the impending, epic struggle against imposing odds.

Then it's full immersion into *Loom*'s 3-Dimensional, scrolling panoramic landscape. Where detailed animation, high definition graphics, startling special effects and stirring musical score combine to create a total environment. Captivating you from the opening scene to the final climax.

And your quest for a truly magical fantasy adventure is finally realized.

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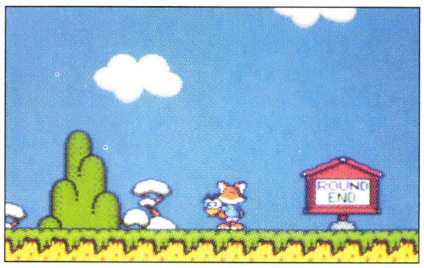
CIRCLE #123 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Scattered throughout the countryside are eggs containing weapons, enemies or items. Your greatest weapon is Bird Fly. Bird Fly uses your shoulder as a perch most of the time, but punch a button, and he flies a short distance away, knocking off any enemies in his path. He'll then return to you, provided you don't lose him. If you do, you'll need to crack a lot of eggs to find another.

A lengthy bonus game involving a maze with treasures emerges at the terminus of each level. At the end of the maze, you play a slot machine to determine how many free lives you get. Now I *know* I've seen this game before!

In order to utilize the items you collect from eggs (or receive after successfully battling some creatures), you have to hit the **Reset** button on the console. That's a major disadvantage for those of us who don't care to take our hands off the console when we're playing...particularly if you're using a remote joystick and the console is across the room!

The goal in *Psycho Fox* is to guide your fox across the scrolling landscape, squashing enemies and gathering valuable treasure along the way.



The graphics are not what you'd expect from Sega. Compared with *Alex Kidd: The Lost Stars* (which is close in spirit to *Psycho Fox*), the graphics are sparse and not nearly as detailed. In fact, the screens are downright bland-looking—dare I say it?—very reminiscent of *Super Mario Bros. 2*. They improve in spots, but the characters are quite tiny, and some of the objects are so small it's impossible to determine what they're supposed to be.

I recommend this game strictly for addicts of the *SMB* genre. It's loaded with some very difficult challenges (it's too tough for young children), but you'll definitely get the feeling you've played this one before...if that matters to you.

—Joshua Mandel

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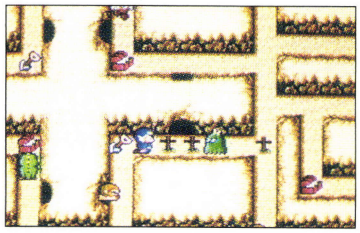
Crater Maze

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($39.00)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

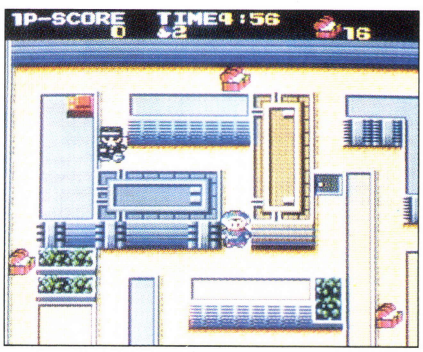
In this *Pac-Man*-type game, you control the time-traveling Opi as he finds his way through 60 mazes, picking up treasure chests, weapons and other special items, all in an attempt to rescue four friends kidnapped by the nasty Zenzombie. Each



maze is different than the one before, and four time zones are represented in the game. You will travel from the ancient past to the distant future in your wanderings, via the time door found at the end of each maze.

As you run through the maze searching for treasure chests and the key that'll unlock the time door, count on being pursued by the Zenzombie's feisty followers. Thanks to your trusty shovels, however, you can dig holes in which the enemies will fall. Once in a hole, another swipe of the shovel will bury an enemy permanently. Each buried enemy is marked by a cross worth 1,000 bonus points at the end of the round.

As you destroy enemies, you'll find various special items and weapons. These include the stop watch, which freezes all the enemies in place; the ice crystal, which changes enemies into blocks of ice; the slowing medicine, which slows the speed of enemies to 50 percent of their normal rate; and the helmet, which renders Opi invincible. There are special weapons to be found, including the yo-yo, the bubble gun and the freeze beam.





NEC's *Crater Maze* is a *Pac-Man*-type contest, suitable for all ages, that has you searching for treasure chests and dispatching adversaries.

You will traverse most of each maze on foot, but two special devices, the warp holes and the springs, will speed your escape from pursuing enemies or get you into areas that are not accessible by any other means. The warp holes instantly transport you to a different location. The springs allow you to bounce in one of four directions, soaring over the heads of your enemies.

Due to the fact that you can select *Crater Maze*'s difficulty level, it's a suitable game for people of all ages, even young children. The easiest setting will be a snap for experienced gamers. (I finished the entire game, all 60 levels, on my first try, ending with a score of over 2,000,000.)

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* N for Nintendo Entertainment System and F for Sega, Atari, Amstrad and Commodore game systems.

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CIRCLE #124 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

The higher difficulty setting, however, adds many challenges to the game. For example, when the game is set for a novice, Opi can never fall into a hole he has dug. On the higher difficulty settings, he can. This single difference changes the game play significantly. Regardless of the difficulty you choose, *Crater Maze* features an unlimited continue that'll let you begin a game on the last level you finished.

Crater Maze is a game that will appeal to the whole family, thanks to its good graphics, interesting animation and splendid sound effects. If you'll excuse the pun, just about anyone will dig *Crater Maze*.

—Clayton Walnum



Throughout *Crater Maze*'s 60 levels, your on-screen character, Opi, will meet all forms of creatures, though the various weapons he finds will help him on his mission.

NEC Technologies
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191-1094
(312) 860-9500

Cyber Core

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Most games released these days seem to fall into two general categories: the run-jump-shoot type, made famous by the *Super Mario Bros.* contests, and the shoot-'em-ups, which date back to the days of blastfests like *Space Invaders*. *Cyber Core*, a forward-scrolling blastathon for the TurboGrafx-16, easily falls into the latter category.

The scenario: After years in deep space, you return to Earth only to find it taken over by a race of giant insects. In order to recapture the planet, you must annihilate thousands of creepy crawlies, nightmare bugs that are destroying everything in their path. You merge with a Kimyra, an ultra life form, thus becoming half-human and half-insect. With superhuman powers you then set forth to restore earth to the human race.

Cyber Core has six challenging levels of insect-nuking action. In your fight to rescue Earth, you'll battle above an ocean, through a ruined city, across a desert and in three other locations, ending with the invaders' underground nests. Your enemies include such six-legged creatures as re-flies, big-horned cicadas, blast spores and skull ticks, in addition to the boss bugs Rock Worm, Side Winder, Beelzebub, Double Saw and others.

Being half-insect, you can metamorphose into more powerful life forms. By shooting egg-carrying enemies, pods are released that move you higher and higher up the insect evolutionary scale when retrieved in the right order, giving you greater strength and more powerful weapons.

In addition, several power-ups will appear on the screen, including shields, which absorb the enemies shots; magic balls, which make you temporarily invincible; life-force icons, which act as 1-Ups; and block busters, which, when grabbed, destroy everything on the screen.

Cyber Core's graphics are up to TurboGrafx standards, with vivid backgrounds and nicely detailed sprites. The music, although not as engaging as in many of the TurboGrafx games, is still a step above the standard fare we've come to expect from other gaming systems. The sound effects are wonderful, particularly if you're playing in the stereo mode.

As for playability, this is one tough game, a bug blastathon that will leave your controller hand aching. As with many shoot-'em-ups, until you learn the enemies' attack patterns, even the first level will seem to require superhuman coordination and speed. You'll definitely want to have your turbo fire cranked up for this one. Maneu-







Cyber Core, a shoot-'em-up battle for the TurboGrafx-16, will test your trigger finger, reflexes and stamina.

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*Send the UPC Bar Codes from any two FCI games with your size, name, address, zip code, and $2 postage and handling in an envelope to this address: FCI T-SHIRT OFFER, PO Box 669508, Charlotte, NC 28266. Adult sizes only: S, M, L, XL. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Offer good through Dec. 31, 1990, or while supplies last.

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† Game Players Magazine, 1989

CIRCLE #125 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

vering your on-screen character is hard enough without having to continually tap the fire button. Still, you will need to switch between the "I" and "II" buttons, since some enemies must be destroyed with bombs, while others will be affected only by your laser guns. Get those fingers limber!

In summary, *Cyber Core* is a fast-action shoot-'em-up that's challenging enough to tax even veteran gun hands. Its combination of detailed graphics and interesting sound effects make it a game that you'll return to often.

—C. W.

NEC Technologies, Inc.
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191-1094
(312) 860-9500

Rad Racer II

SQUARE SOFT

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Rad Racer II is another in a seemingly infinite line of conventional racing games. Trust me; you've seen this all before. The road streams "toward" you as you maneuver your speeding vehicle around tight corners and competing cars. Go too fast and you'll spin out on the corners. Go too slow and you won't compete in the next race.

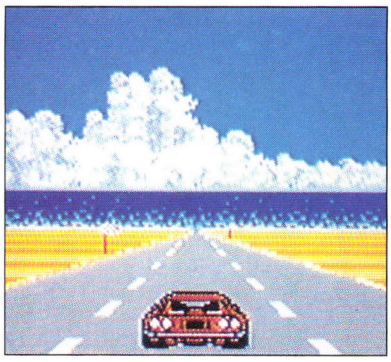
And those, folks, are all the gears you'll find in this crankcase.

Okay, there are a couple of minor twists. In order to get a fast start—at the beginning of a race or after crashing—you can hold the down arrow on the control pad, wait until your turbo-boost power builds to its max and then press the "A" button to blast off from a dead stop to instant full speed. Kinda neat. In addition, once on the road, pressing up on the controller will engage a turbo accelerator, which adds a little pop to your ride.

As for the race, don't expect anything unusual. You drive. You turn. You brake.







If the shelf that holds your NES games has a gap in the racing section, Square Soft's *Rad Racer II* may be what you're looking for.

You make it to the next round or you don't. Besides expert driving, sideswiping competing cars is about the only strategy you can employ to discourage your opponents.

If you find it difficult to advance to the tougher tracks (it does take some practice), a stage select lets you start at any level. Moreover, you can choose between day or night scenes. These features, however, cannot be selected normally from an on-screen menu, rather, they must be accessed by a series of button presses.

Rad Racer II's graphics are good, but typical. Each race has a background graphic that depicts the city in which the race is taking place.

Without a doubt, though, this game's brightest feature is its music. You can choose between two different soundtracks, both of which are excellent. You can also choose to turn off the music and race with nothing but the sound of squealing tires, revving engines and grinding metal.

Why did Square Soft decide that NESers needed another racing game of this type? Beats me. If your gaming library has a hole on the racing shelf, this one may fit the bill. If you've been down this road before, just drive on by.

—C. W.

Square Soft
Westpark G-1, 8347-154th Avenue N.E.
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 861-0101



Super Hydlide

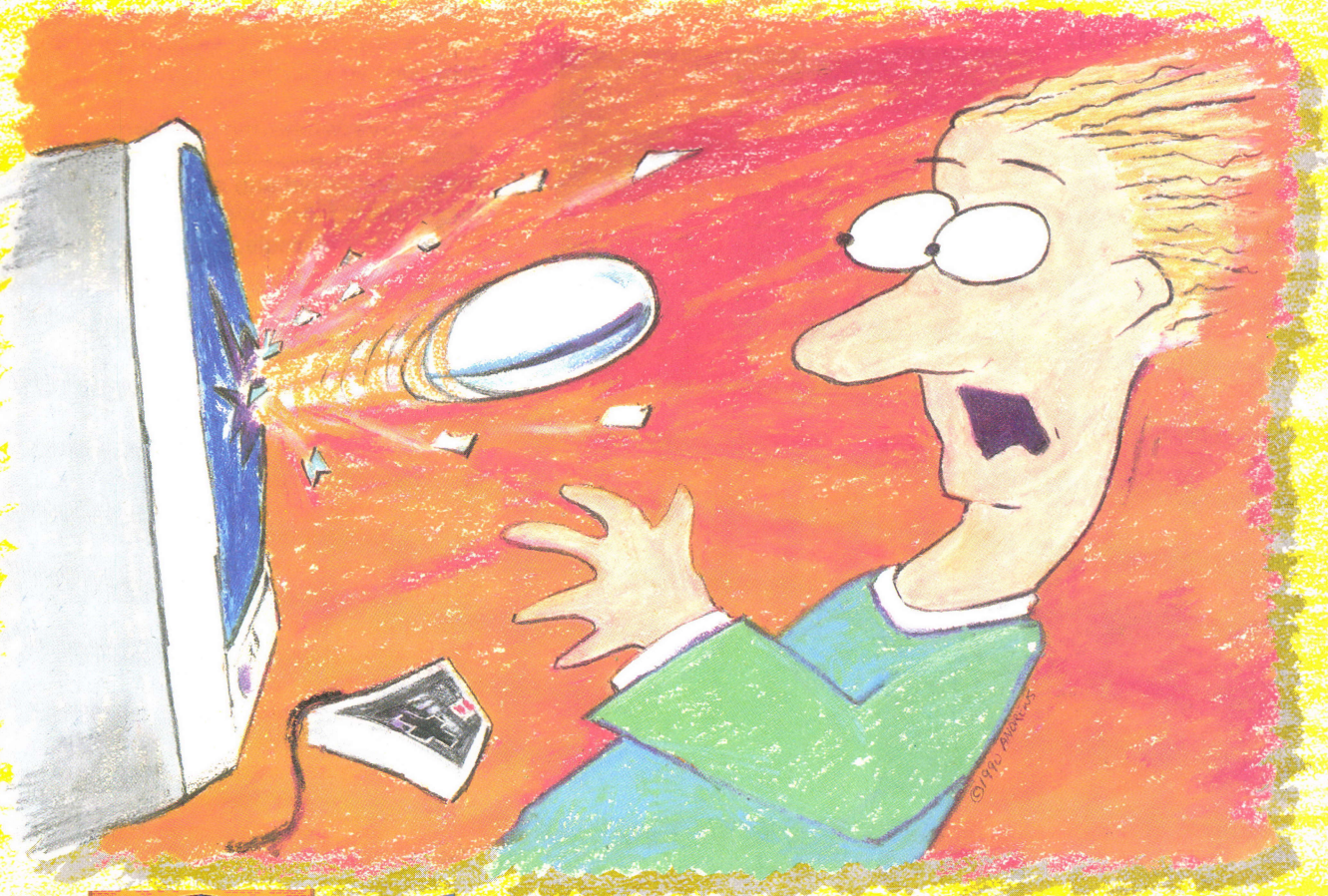
SEISMIC

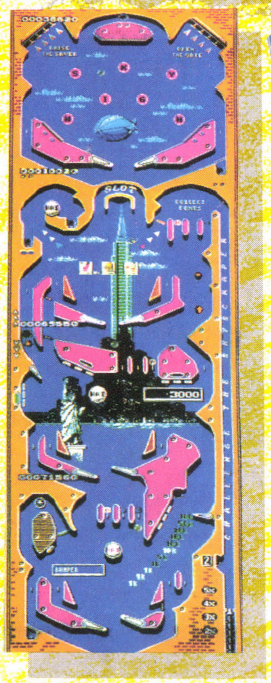
For the Sega Genesis

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

When one plunks down the big bucks for a 16-bit gaming system and pays similarly hefty prices for each game cart, what does one expect? Better sound and graphics? Absolutely. Greater depth, longer and

COMIN' AT YA!

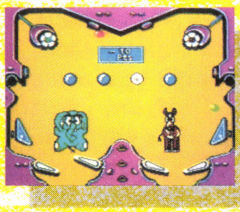






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CIRCLE #126 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

more complex games? Definitely. And Genesis owners have enjoyed exactly those returns: Some of the carts produced for our system are without question the most vivid and absorbing to ever grace the home video screen.

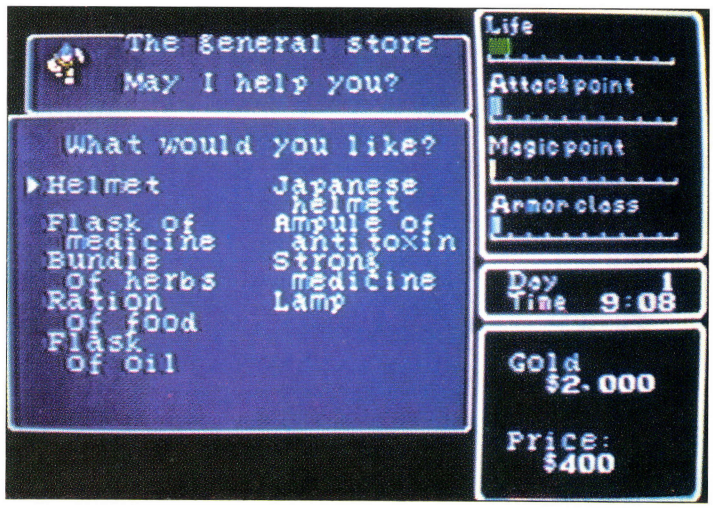
But *Super Hydlide* is, in some respects, a backward step from what we've been led to expect from a Genesis cart. A hybrid RPG/action game, *Super Hydlide* too heavily resembles its NES forerunner, *Hydlide*. Although *Super Hydlide* is a much larger game overall, with four megabits of game code and a battery backup, the game suffers from entirely inadequate graphics and a vague, unexciting action interface.





Seismic's *Super Hydlide* is a blend of action and role-playing components featuring realistic aspects, such as a day/night cycle and the need for your character to eat and sleep.

At the outset, you select the character you'll guide through the adventure: warrior, thief, monk or priest. The monk and the priest are chiefly magic users and very weak physically. The warrior and the thief can both use magic, but only a limited number of spells are available to them. (Monks and priests can use the whole spectrum of magic.) Warriors and thieves are also far stronger and have greater constitutions, making them a safer, if less interesting, choice for those who are tired of having their character wiped out repeatedly in the early stages of the game.



As the game progresses, you guide your character through villages, cities and dungeons. Along the way, you'll engage in hundreds of short, simple battles. The battles consist of moving your character next to the enemy and hitting a button. The button swings your sword, casts your spell or uses whatever weapon or offensive technique you've currently selected with the standard menu system (reminiscent of the menus used in *Phantasy Star II*). Sometimes you'll fail to connect, either because your abilities aren't perfected or because you're not positioned correctly to deal with your opponent. When defeated, the enemy disappears or you die, and your game is over. The battery backup allows you to save several games in progress, so you rarely have to start from scratch.

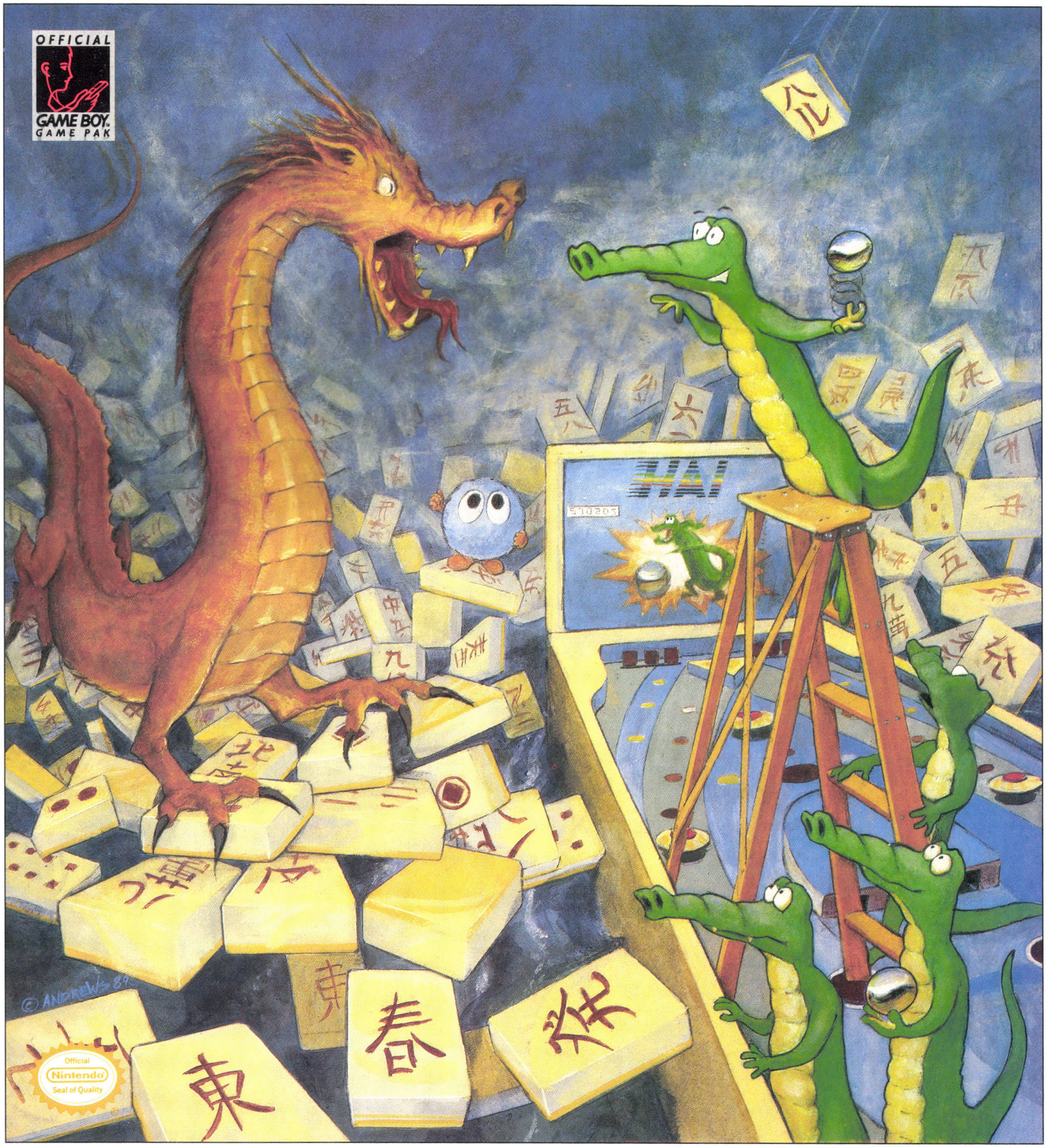
The overwhelming problem with the game are the graphics. Although the landscapes are varied and colorful, the characters—seen from overhead as in most RPGs—are miniscule. Details are impossible to make out. Enemies blend into the surrounding area. Battles become a guessing game. Are you close enough to the enemy? Are you facing in the right direction? Is that another enemy approaching the rear, or is it one of the NPCs (non-player characters) you were just talking to? In fact, these characters are so small—and so blurred—that you'll think you're playing an NES game, a poorly drawn one at that.

There are some commendable details in *Super Hydlide*. And the music is quite good, more varied than *Phantasy Star II*'s. Like some other sophisticated RPGs, the passage of time is a factor. There's a complete day/night cycle that your character must respond to by eating and sleeping. Weight is figured into your inventory: You will definitely have to do some inventory juggling—and guessing—in order to determine which items need to be carried and when.

But despite the nice touches, this game will provide you with 40-80 hours of nonstop squinting. Add to that the monotony of repetitive, simplistic combat and what's left is a major disappointment. If the battle sequences were fewer but more strategically interesting and if the graphics demonstrated any advance over the 8-bit games of three years ago, *Super Hydlide* might have been a winner. As it is, only the most easily entertained will feel they've gotten their money's worth from *Super Hydlide*.

—J. M.

Seismic, Inc.
3375 Scott Boulevard, Suite 100
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-3682



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CIRCLE #127 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

THE TURBOGRAFX-16 GOES INTO THE SHRINKING MACHINE

BY ANDY EDDY



VG&CE first reported on the possibility of a TurboGrafx-16 portable in the *News Bits* section of our February 1990 issue, then showed you an artist's representation of the unit in our April 1990 *News Bits*. Unfortunately, little news has since come out of Japan, where the machine is being developed, about this much anticipated game player.

As this issue was going to press, VG&CE acquired more data and pictures on the "Game Tank," the working title for the TG-16 portable. It was scheduled to be on display for the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago (June 2-5, 1990), which leads us to think—and the reliable sources of our grapevine back this up—that the portable will be ready for introduction in America this Christmas. VG&CE will update you as to when the TG-16 portable, as yet unnamed, is firmly announced for purchase in this country.

Specifications and Details

As we've already noted in our previous coverage, the TurboGrafx-16 portable (we'll refer to it as the TGP) will play all existing TurboChip games, which is its obvious advantage. Unlike the Lynx and Game Boy, NEC won't have to develop and produce another software line to support the portable.

That's the strength of the TGP: It's identical to the TG-16 from a hardware standpoint. Lots of readers call to ask us about specifications, mainly resolution, and want to know which system is strongest. These days it's not so much resolution that's important anymore, but instead the number of colors that can be displayed simultaneously. In the TG-16's case—and, therefore, the TGP—the specs report that up to sixteen 16-color palettes can be put on-screen simultaneously, which means 256 different colors out of a possible 512.

Colors and resolution aren't the only things that the TGP will borrow from its big brother. It will also use the same processor, handle 1.5 MIPS (million instructions per second) and allow up to 64 sprites per screen with up to 16 colors per sprite.

Similar to the Game Boy and Lynx, which were constructed with built-in networking capabilities for multiplayer games, the TGP will also feature a communication-link cable that will allow two-player games. For this reason, NEC will start developing games that take advantage of this capability, rather than offering TGP-specific software. Rumor has it that the first game the communication link will be tested on is a head-to-head air-hockey contest, with each person seeing his perspective of the action on each TGP.

The TGP, much like the Game Boy in size and shape, is equipped with all the necessities—bells and whistles too. On the lower half of the face, just under the screen and speaker slots, are the controls. Not only does it have the standard directional rosette and buttons for **SELECT**, **RUN**, "I" and "II" functions (as on the TurboGrafx controllers), it's also been furnished with "turbo" switches to individually alter the rate of autofiring by each "I" and "II" button. Additionally, the TGP will have a stereo-headphone jack for personal game play.

Thanks to the diminutive size of the TurboChips, the "cartridges" that hold the game information, the TGP doesn't need a large cartridge slot. At the top rear of the unit, there is a small opening where the TurboChip fits snugly. In contrast, talk of an NES or SMS portable eventually leads to discussions of size and how much bigger a portable game machine would have to be built in order to handle those bulky cartridges—not a concern with the TGP.

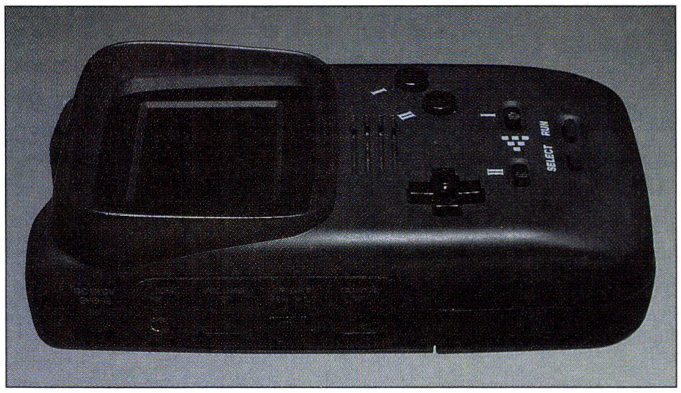
What would a portable be without battery power? The TGP requires six "AA" batteries to run, which NEC figures will last a minimum of 3-5 hours during normal usage. The plan is also to offer a rechargeable battery pack, an AC adapter and a car cigarette-lighter cable, but it hadn't been decided at press time which of those items would be optional and which would be part of the TGP package.

As we spent time with a prototype of the TGP at the R&D laboratories in Japan, we were amazed at how crisp the picture was. It was so clear, we could easily read the numbers and characters on the power-up capsules as we played *Blazing Lazers*. Similarly, the charts and maps of *Military Madness* were crystal clear. The credit for the high-quality visuals goes to the type of screen used: an MIM Active Matrix LC (liquid crystal) display. "Active Matrix" means that each dot on the screen has a separate transistor controlling it, so the screen information can be updated quickly without smearing or blurring.

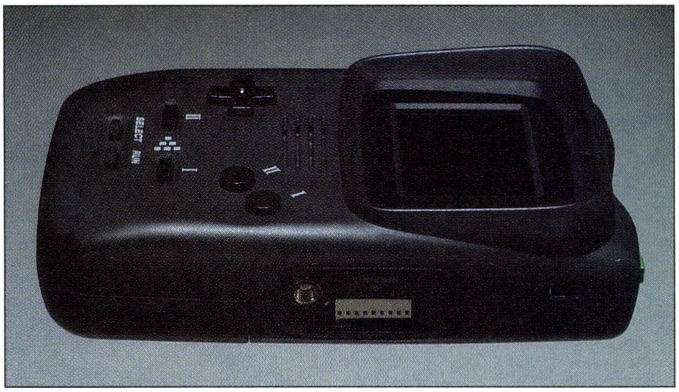
Unfortunately, using active-matrix screens is costly and can slow down production. Epson, NEC's TGP display manufacturer, rejects any screen with even one nonworking dot.

TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS

Base Unit:	185mm x 110mm x 46mm (approx. 7 1/4" x 4 1/4" x 1 3/4") 410 grams w/o batteries (approx. 14 1/2 ounces) 560 grams w/batteries (approx. 20 ounces) (identical to TurboGrafx-16 in hardware specifications otherwise)
Screen:	39.7mm x 51.1mm (approx. 1 1/2" x 2") 312 x 238 dots (74,256 dots total)
Tuner:	113mm x 52mm x 40mm (approx. 4 1/2" x 2" x 1 1/2") 150 grams (approx. 5 1/4 ounces)



The left-side view of the TurboGrafx-16 portable keeps most of the controls close at hand (from left to right): a jack for off-board DC power, the stereo-headphone jack, a volume knob, a two-position brightness switch and a variable contrast knob.



A peek at the right side of the TGP yields perhaps the most exciting feature, a port that will hold the optional television tuner. This device will not only turn the TGP into a fully functioning TV, but also lets you use it as a monitor for other video sources, like a VCR or camcorder.

Speaking of the display, the resolution of the TGP is 312 x 238 for a total of 74,256 dots. This makes for not only a good picture for video-game playing, but also for TV watching. And the TGP won't be limited by available lighting, as is the case with Nintendo's Game Boy. The TGP will be equipped with a florescent backlight with a life span of approximately 4,000 hours of use.

It's Not Just for Games

Did we say TV watching? Well, as we noted in the February issue, NEC is also planning to produce an optional tuner (with a rumored target price of $79) that can couple to the TGP, turning it into a fully functional UHF/VHF television. This tuner, though equipped with a telescoping rod antenna, will also have a separate antenna input.

The coup de grace is that the tuner will also feature audio- and video-input jacks. This will allow the TGP to operate as a monitor for a camcorder, VCR or other video device. As with the TG-16—which NEC is positioning as a home-entertainment device thanks to its CD unit—the TGP is more than just a video-game system. What will NEC think of next?

Stocking Stuffer

Unfortunately, that's all the information we have—though it makes for a nice dream machine. It might be pushing it to expect that NEC could bring the TGP out by Christmas 1990, but knowing the determination that the company has displayed so far and its Japanese roots, it's even money that you could be holding a TGP in your hands by New Years Day 1991.

My palms are getting sweaty just thinking about it.



The compact size of the TurboChips makes it easy for NEC to work a portable around them. A slot at the top rear of the TGP holds the cartridge (in this case, the Japanese version of *Bonk's Adventure*); the door at the bottom opens to house six "AA" batteries.

You Could Win a TurboGrafx-16 System!

VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT and NEC Technologies have joined together to offer our lucky readers the chance to win a TurboGrafx-16. The winner, picked at random, will receive a brand-new TG-16 game system, a TurboStick controller and assorted TurboChip games.

To enter, just send your name, address and phone number on a postcard to

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9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
Attn: TG-16 Contest

All entries must be received by August 31, 1990, and the winner will be announced in the December issue of VG&CE. Best of luck to you!

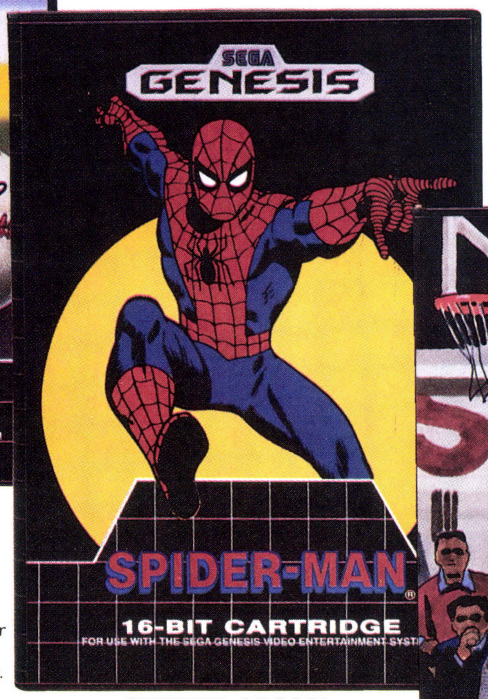
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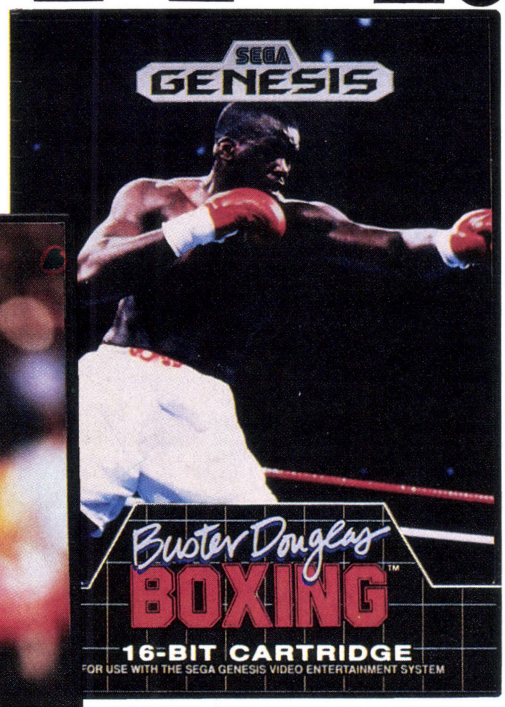
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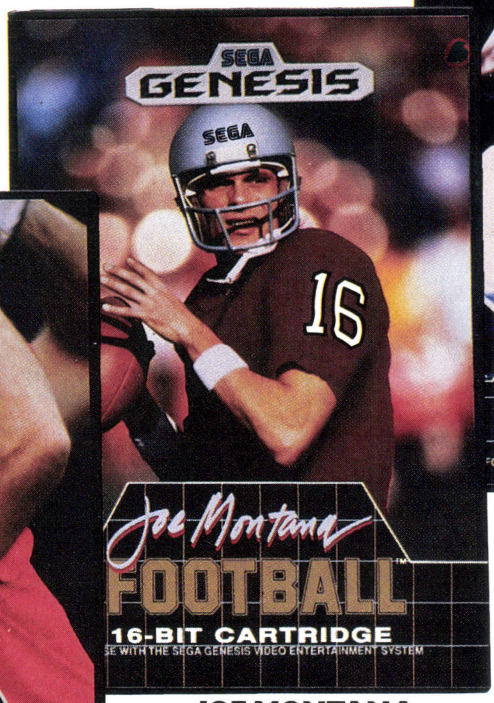
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TENDON'T.



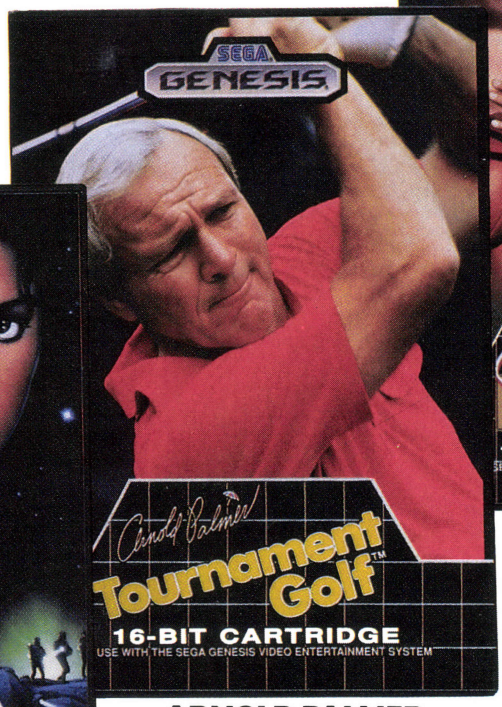
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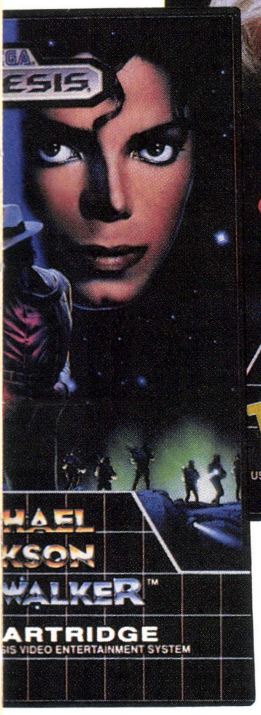
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moves: the dance-kick, the hat attack, the lean. You're taking on Mr. Big and his goons. It's time to give it everything you've got. To the beat of Michael's biggest hits. In stereo. And it's only on Genesis.



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Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?"

Like a swift slap in the face, Bruce Wayne reeled at the sound of it. It was the same thing he heard as a boy, the same words his parents' murderer spoke before the laughing thug slid off into the night, but this time he wasn't just hearing the echo inside his head. There in front of him was the Joker, the kingpin of Gotham City's downfall.

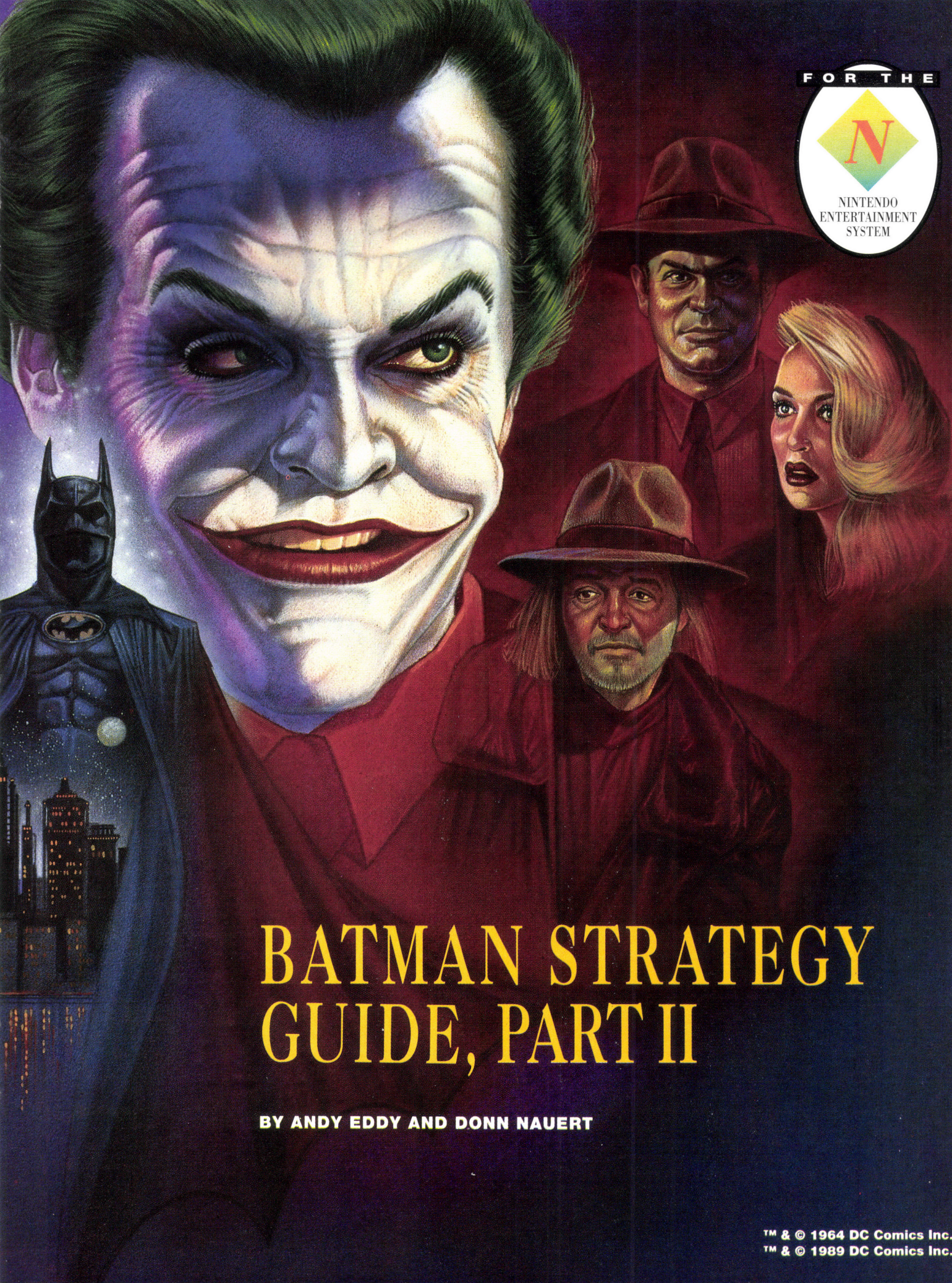
He felt a strength surge through him, far beyond the simple adrenaline rush a confrontation like this brings. Oddly enough, the creature who stood before him had taken his life from him when he was young, but at the same time had given him a new existence, that of the crime fighter Batman. And this new existence was staring Jack Napier, who himself had been transformed into the Joker, in the eye.

"Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?"

The words reverberated around the masonry of the Gotham City Cathedral. These sacred walls had never before bore witness to the intensity that this encounter brought forth. But before it was over, one of the two combatants would lie prone and lifeless at the base of the stone tower.



Illustration by Alan Hunter



BATMAN STRATEGY GUIDE, PART II

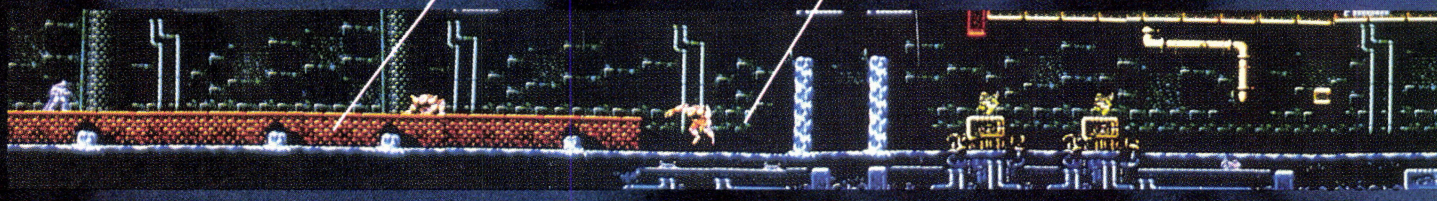
BY ANDY EDDY AND DONN NAUERT

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STAGE 3-1

The first thing you'll face here are a couple of jaders, bouncy creatures that are a pain to destroy. The best strategy against a jader is to pick the batarang and fire it as he lands. To avoid him crashing down on you repeatedly, move toward him a little as he is ready to jump. This will launch him over your head instead of *on* your head.

Watch out for the mobile home mines that lie in wait, slightly hidden, underwater.



STAGE 3-2

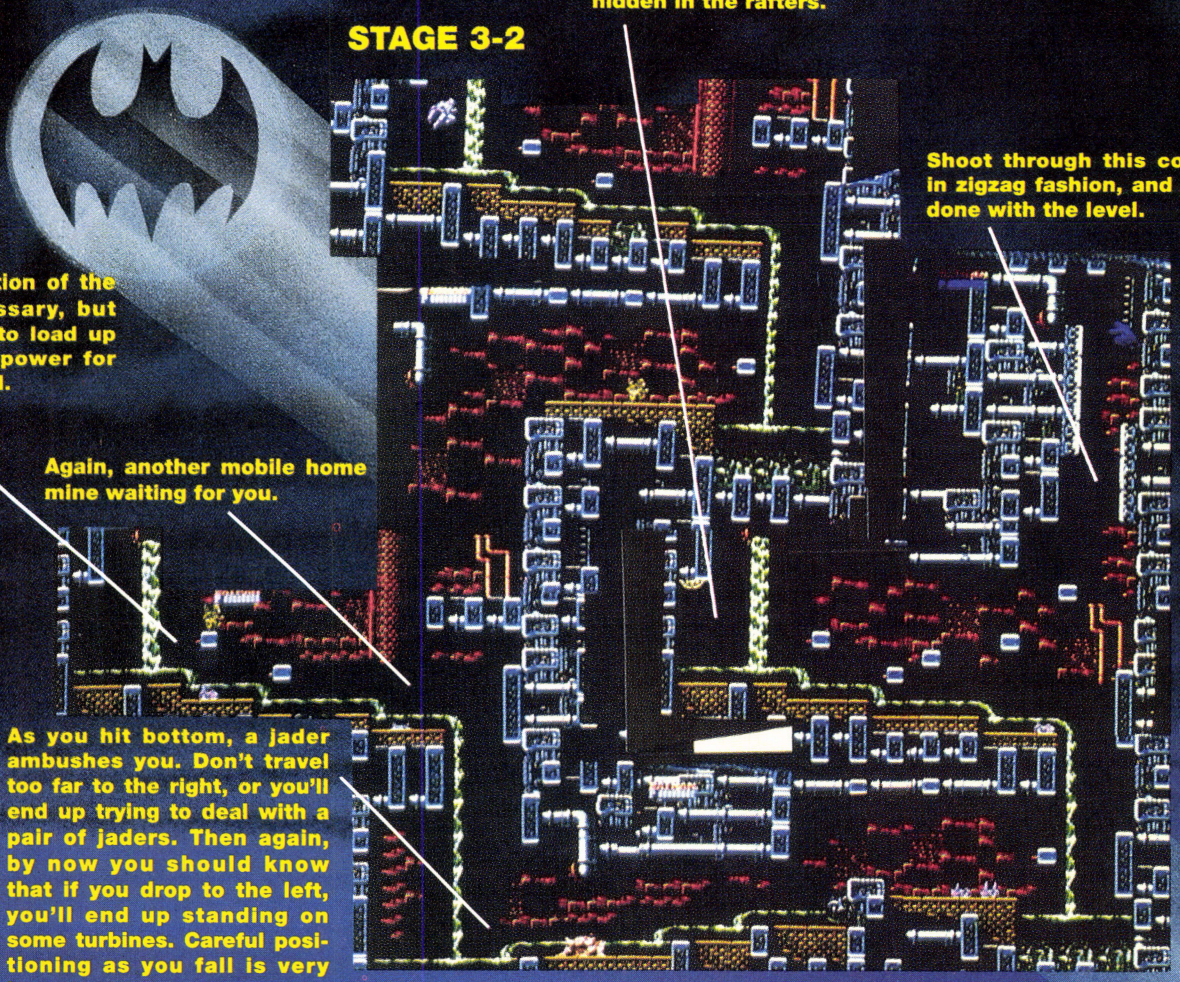
Oh, no. Another drop claw hidden in the rafters.

Shoot through this corridor in zigzag fashion, and you're done with the level.

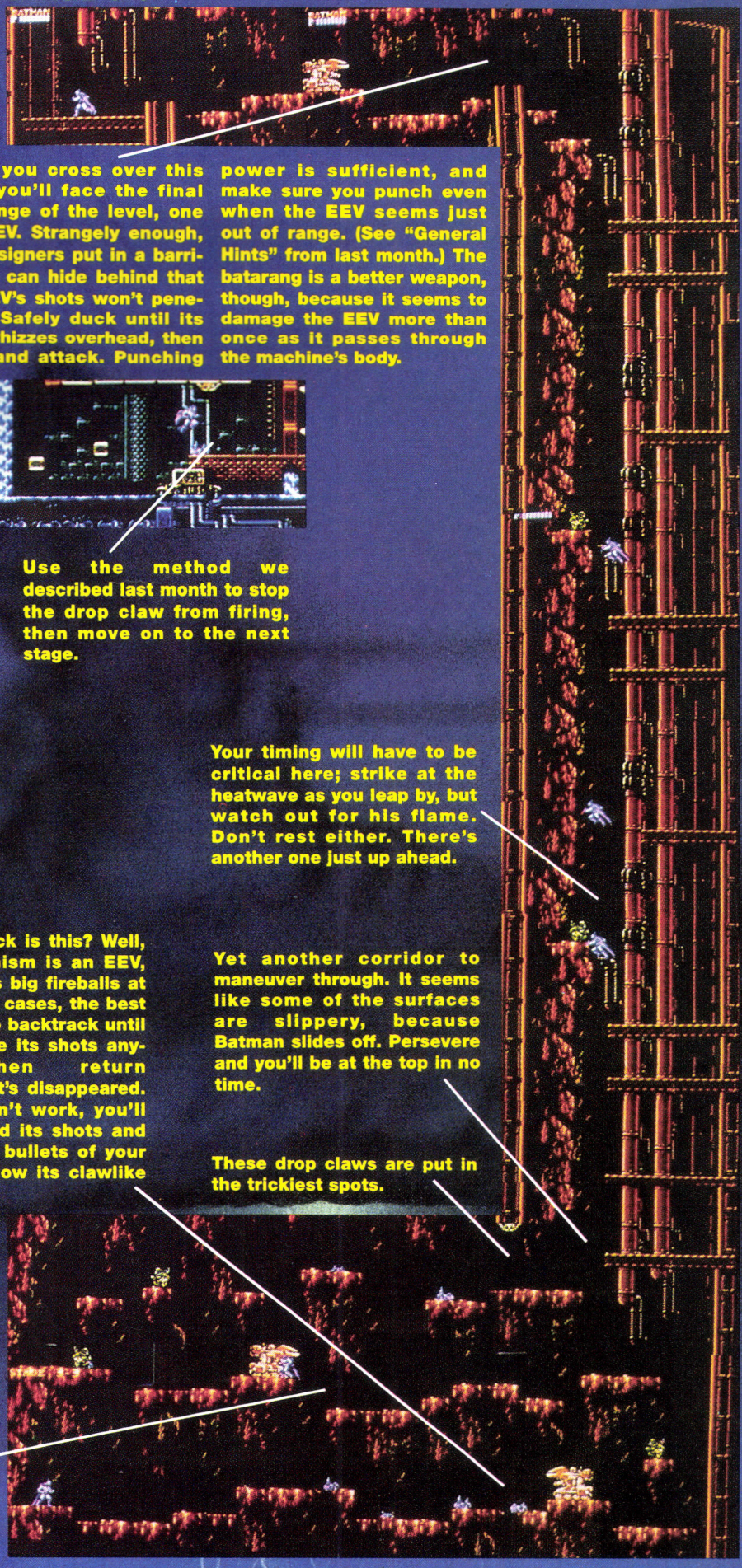
Going to this section of the stage isn't necessary, but it's a good place to load up on weapons and power for the enemies ahead.

Again, another mobile home mine waiting for you.

As you hit bottom, a jader ambushes you. Don't travel too far to the right, or you'll end up trying to deal with a pair of jaders. Then again, by now you should know that if you drop to the left, you'll end up standing on some turbines. Careful positioning as you fall is very important.

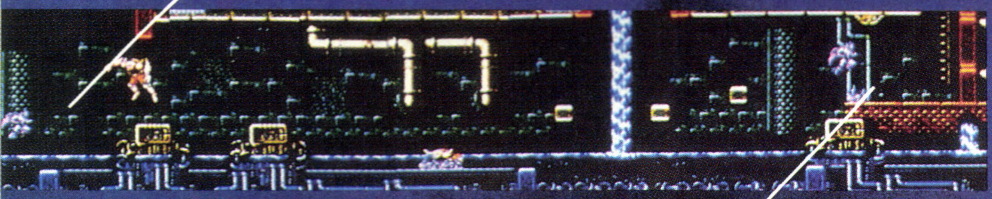


STAGE 3-3



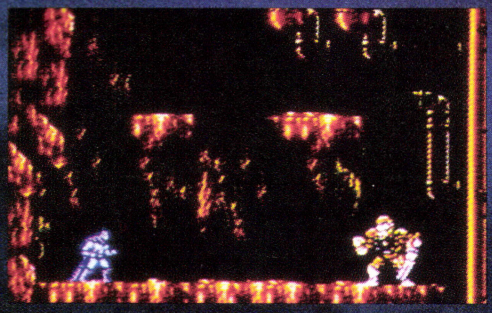
When you cross over this wall, you'll face the final challenge of the level, one last EEV. Strangely enough, the designers put in a barrier you can hide behind that the EEV's shots won't penetrate. Safely duck until its shot whizzes overhead, then jump and attack. Punching power is sufficient, and make sure you punch even when the EEV seems just out of range. (See "General Hints" from last month.) The batarang is a better weapon, though, because it seems to damage the EEV more than once as it passes through the machine's body.

More jaders here, but now that you've got the strategy down, you'll be able to quickly move through.



Use the method we described last month to stop the drop claw from firing, then move on to the next stage.

STAGE 3-4



Welcome to the Electrocutioner's den. The Electrocutioner is a vicious force, thanks to his moon attacker beam. To live through his onslaught, you must be fast on the draw. If you dawdle, you'll surely die, and jumping atop the high platforms is only sometimes successful. (The Electrocutioner will take occasional leaps up to tag you on your lofty perch.) The best way to kill him is to move to the middle of the room and sling batarangs at him as quickly as possible. You'll end up with one or two notches of power left, but you'll survive.

What the heck is this? Well, this mechanism is an EEV, and it shoots big fireballs at you. In *some* cases, the best strategy is to backtrack until you can't see its shots anymore, then return and—voilà—it's disappeared. If that doesn't work, you'll have to avoid its shots and dump a few bullets of your own just below its clawlike appendage.

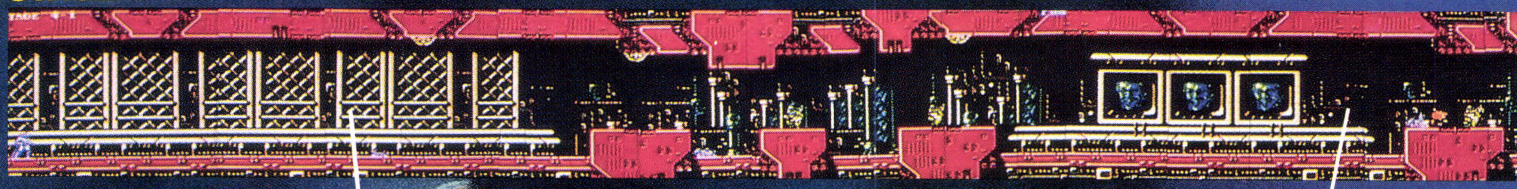
Your timing will have to be critical here; strike at the heatwave as you leap by, but watch out for his flame. Don't rest either. There's another one just up ahead.

Yet another corridor to maneuver through. It seems like some of the surfaces are slippery, because Batman slides off. Persevere and you'll be at the top in no time.

These drop claws are put in the trickiest spots.

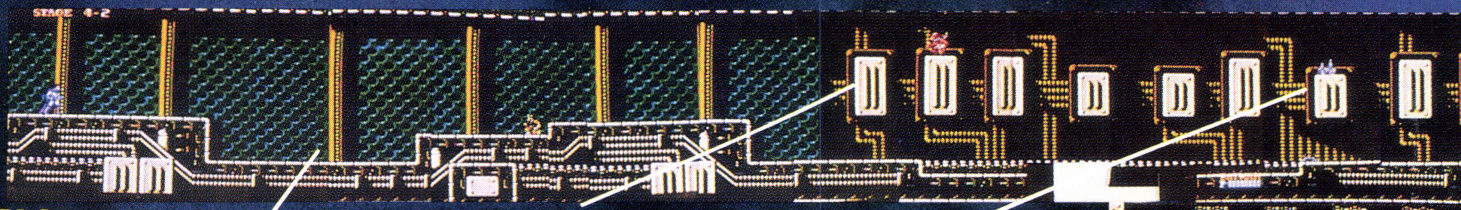
Watch out for another EEV here. Make sure you clear the mobile tracker before you take the EEV on.

STAGE 4-1



Don't expect things to let up in the laboratory ruins, the site of the Joker's backup lair. At the start, you get a grouping of now familiar adversaries—a jader, some mobile trackers, drop claws and heatwaves—all thrown at you simultaneously.

For some reason, this jader doesn't mind keeping his distance. Just the same, finish him off quickly while you keep your eyes open for other assailants wandering into the picture.



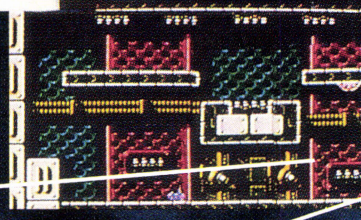
STAGE 4-2

Right here you'll meet a few soldiers. If you need weapons and/or power, this is a good spot to gather both by destroying an adversary, picking up the icon, backtracking and returning for another battle. Be careful when you back up, because you may find things that weren't there originally.

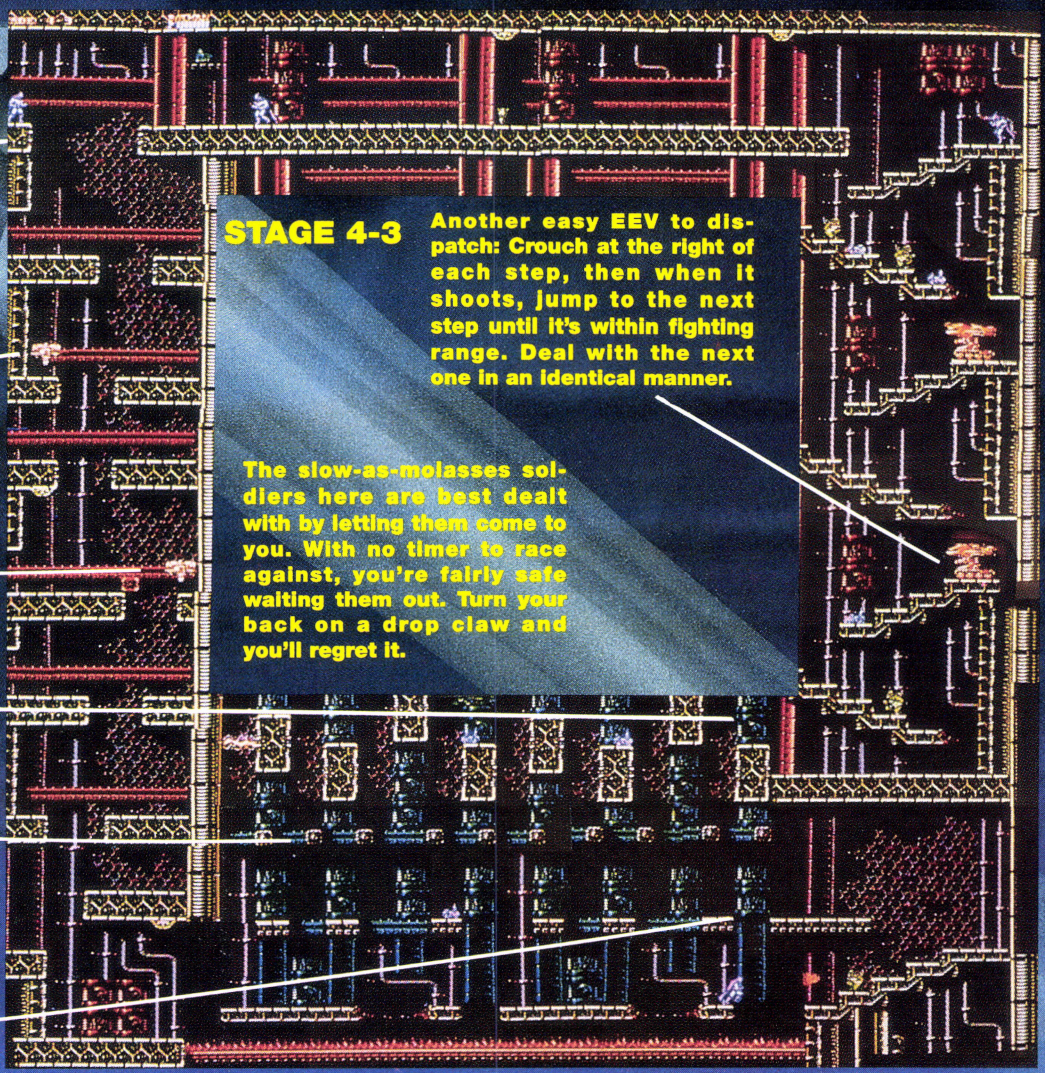
These platforms are simple to negotiate if you drop between them, grab the wall on the way down and jump up to the next platform. This drop-grab-and-jump move, which we detailed last month, will keep you from landing on the gears below. (The ceiling is too high to jump from platform to platform consistently.)

You'll have better luck avoiding this tracker and detouring on the floor below after drawing out the mobile home mine.

Jump up to the left overhang, and leap right over the gears...



Don't jump too high, or you'll get a batache on the gears above.



STAGE 4-3

Another easy EEV to dispatch: Crouch at the right of each step, then when it shoots, jump to the next step until it's within fighting range. Deal with the next one in an identical manner.

The slow-as-molasses soldiers here are best dealt with by letting them come to you. With no timer to race against, you're fairly safe waiting them out. Turn your back on a drop claw and you'll regret it.

What's this? An exit just across the chasm? Seems like it's in reach, but it's not. Sorry, you'll have to take the *long* way.

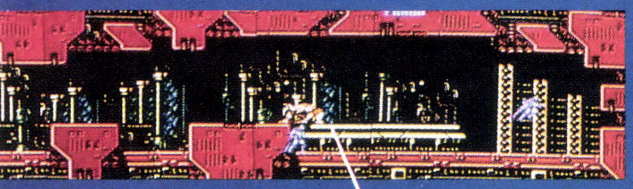
Watch out for the rail runner, which you first meet here. Did you notice that you won't take any damage if you rapidly punch it?

You've got a drop claw, a rail runner and sparks flying across your exit path. Be extremely careful here! (Stay to the right to avoid the drop claw's bombs.)

Jumping up here will provide a mini-shortcut.

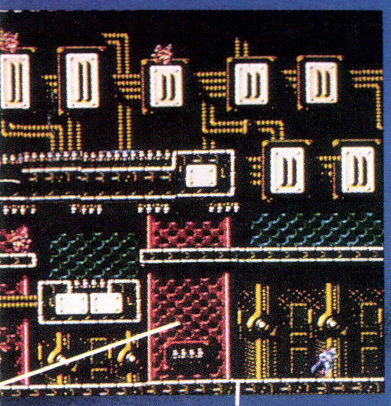
Drop through and you'll find yourself with lots of real estate to cross again.

These jumps are equally challenging, but if you should miss one by a little, you can usually catch the edge of the platform and leap back for another try.



The last jader can be hard to get if he gets trapped on the platform above you, as seen here. If you draw him out onto the same level as you, you'll have an easy time mopping him up.

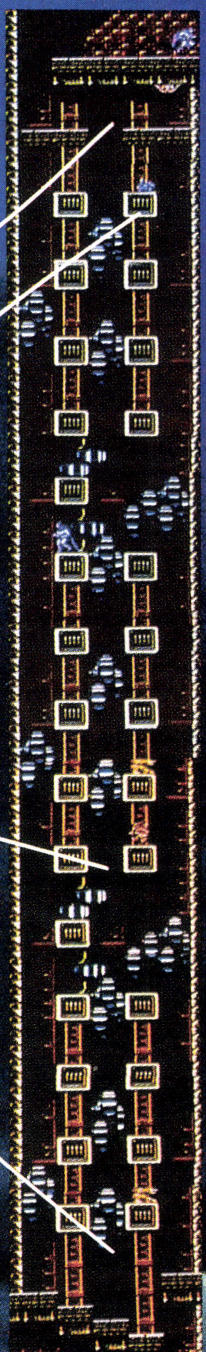
STAGE 5-1



Stay to the left when you get up here, and you'll avoid the drop claw's bombs.

It's a tight fit due to the low ceiling. Jump onto the platform from a low angle.

...then repeat the move here.



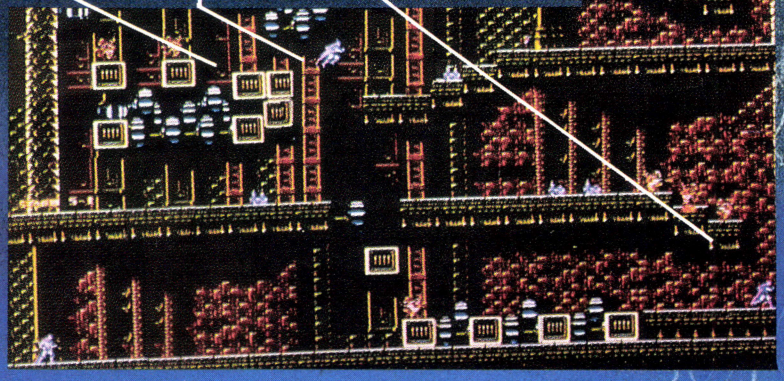
You'd better be well practiced at the drop, grab and jump or else you won't survive the level.

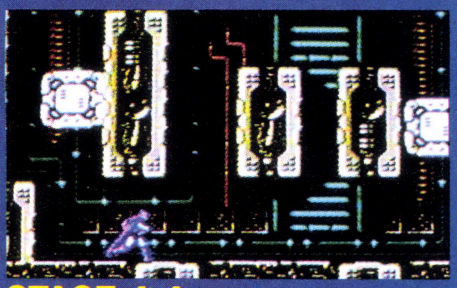
A drop, grab and jump to the right will help you. Watch the drop claw overhead, and don't fall through this canyon, or you'll have to repeat the section.

You'd better get into this area with full power because you'll undoubtedly lose some along the way.

Careful jumps will keep you from losing too much power here.

Welcome to Heatwave City. It's going to take some work to get by these guys, but taking one shot at a time as you leap up is a safe way to operate.

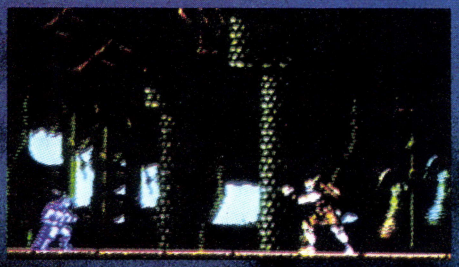




STAGE 4-4

Boy, is this "boss," the dual container alarm, a pain to get past! It's not that hard, but you have to be very determined and consistent. The best method is to climb atop the center platform, and continue punching to the left. (Remember, you just learned that you have protection as long as you keep punching and making contact. If you use a weapon, you will quickly drain your supply.)

Once one of the boxes is out of the way, the other one will make a beeline to the lower-right corner. You'd better follow it down—otherwise you'll end up getting blasted because its shots take up the upper three-quarters of the screen. To make quick work of the remaining box, utilize a fast trigger finger on the spear gun from a crouch, and you'll be out in no time.



At the peak of the Cathedral, the firebug will *warm* you up before you take on the Joker—with 600-million° fireballs! To defeat him, timing is of the essence. First, prepare yourself with the batarang weapon. If you jump over his shots then sling the batarang just before you hit the ground, you'll be surprised how easy he is to dispatch. But don't celebrate yet....



STAGE 5-3

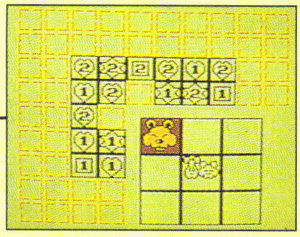
Here he is—the dreaded Joker. Between his gunfire (that's a long barreled weapon), his running attacks and call to the heavens for custom lightning bolts, you'll have your hands full. Most of all, avoid his bullets because each shot causes three points of damage to you.

A firm strategy for finishing off the Joker is to keep punching when he takes a run at you, which keeps you unharmed. Also, if you crouch at the point where his gun touches the floor, you'll be able to hit him while avoiding his lightning bolts and shots. In the end, you can sit back knowing that you've saved Gotham City from certain destruction! And we know now who's in a permanent sleep on the blacktop outside the Gotham City Cathedral.

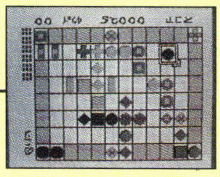
continued from page 36

Soccer Mania—CSG Imagesoft
Link up with a friend or play the computer in this action-packed soccer sports game. Select one of six countries as you compete for the World Cup.

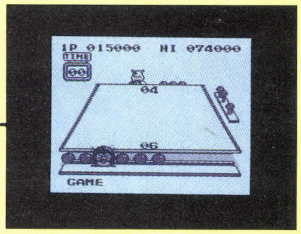
Qbillion—Seta
This puzzle game is guaranteed to test you mentally. Play six different types of games. Players control Mr. Mouse through 120 different built-in puzzle patterns. Try to erase all symbol blocks and push all blank blocks down to floor level, or use the editor to assemble custom puzzle patterns.



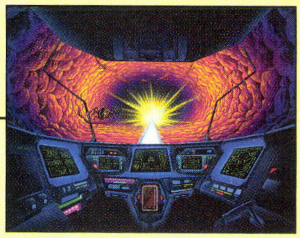
Ishido—The Way of Stones—Nexoft
Ishido is played by one or two players on a game board with 96 possible stone locations. The player draws individual stones—there are 72 stones in total, two each of 36 designs—one at a time and places them on the board. The object is to position the stones, following the rules of the game to score points. Luck of the draw as well as a basic strategy are needed to maximize one's score.



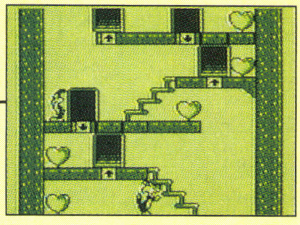
Penguin Wars—Nexoft
A popular and amusing Japanese coin-op game, **Penguin Wars** requires you to roll ten balls into the opposite side of the playing court within 60 seconds while the other player, also an animal character, attempts to roll them back. Balls hitting a character knock him down for a bit, so you must be prepared both offensively and defensively. The winner takes two out of three games to win a set, with five opposing animal-character levels to compete in. And, of course, you can take on a human animal over the Video Link as well.



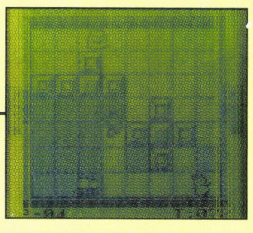
Cosmic Tank-Asuka
You have been selected to lead a top-notch squadron in an attempt to save the galaxy. A combat game that incorporates three types of gaming styles: overhead (tank), 3-D (first person) and horizontal shooter (ship).



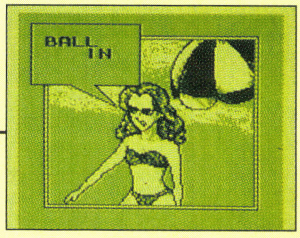
The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle—Kemco/Seika
Crazy Castle has our hero, Bugs Bunny, out to rescue Honey Bunny, trapped by Daffy Duck, Yosemite Sam, Sylvester and Wile E. Coyote. Hop from one spooky room to another, chase up creaking stairs and slide down slippery pipes. Grab cargo crates and toss water buckets when the "boys" get too close. And don't forget to pick up the carrots along the way in this 58-level game.



Dexterity—SNK
The Game Boy is well suited to puzzle games, and SNK is entering the genre with a tile-flipping contest. As Dexter Dolittle, you have to clear your "magic puzzle room" of all the enemies you face. Over 30 stages of mind-boggling, race-against-the-clock action will strain you, as more and more enemies—with names like Snowman, Jelly, Humphrey and King Joshing—enter the fray and gradually move faster. Blocks, bridges and holes are added as obstacles; and all the while the timer ticks down. Every fourth level brings up a bonus round that tests your memory.



Malibu Beach Volleyball—Activision
Hey dudes, it's time to kick sand in the faces of the gnarliest men's and women's teams from four countries as you spike your way around the world. **Malibu Beach Volleyball** can be played alone, against a friend or two players can go against the computer. Totally rad!

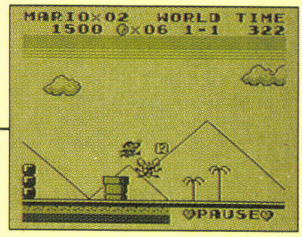


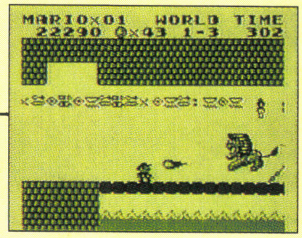
Super Mario Land—Nintendo

No surprises here. This cartridge is an offshoot of the Mario/Super Mario game we've come to love. Our friend runs, jumps, fires weapons and generally behaves in an anti-social manner. It's all justified since he's in pursuit of Daisy Princess who's been captured by that big lug of a space alien, Tatang. There's no time for waltzing around, however, not with four kingdoms (each with three sections to complete), a time limit, various monster perils and an evil boss at the conclusion.

For those who've been in a cave the last few years, the Mario genre is generally a horizontal, left-to-right scrolling adventure. In **Super Mario Land**, the little guy runs at and over obstacles, picking up coins and special tokens, smashing blocks and baddies (by using his head and stomping with his feet, respectively), investigating secret passages and generally trying to stay alive. This isn't easy because there are a lot of ugly things out there, such as the bomb-carrying turtle and the war chicken. But the favorite of this house has to be the upside-down flower that tries to bite Mario's head off. Mario can acquire a superball to help clear an area. There are also some new features not previously seen, such as the sky plane and submarine that Mario can perambulate in with missiles and torpedoes at his disposal.

Of course there is the fun of becoming Super Mario should you find the proper token. As in the original Super Mario games, this doubles your size and enables you to smash blocks to bits. It also gives you some protection against being wounded by creatures (which will shrink you back to normal rather than killing you).





Final Fantasy: The Adventure—Square Soft

The Ashuras have been creating havoc, turning four worlds, four once-beautiful worlds, into a wasteland. It is said there is a paradise, a high tower, that connects the four worlds. You must now select your companions for the quest to find this paradise. You are given a specific amount of energy that can be distributed among four to eight characters who have their own attributes. So be gone, and return peace to these fair lands.

Double Dragon—Tradewest

Moving away from intellectual challenges brings us to **Double Dragon** by Tradewest. The first of four projects, **DD** should be the entertaining martial-arts masterpiece we've all come to know and love. Based on the bigger games already out, this game's control also derives from a system of buttons and joypad. Screens of baddies challenge you to defeat them with skill, not to mention nunchaku, throwing stars, pipes and other weapons you may discover along the way.

Mousetrap Hotel—Milton Bradley

For some animated fun, help Maxie Mouse navigate from the basement on up to his plush penthouse mouse hole. Of course, there are a few obstacles along the way in the form of bad-tempered vermin, laundry chutes and crazed vacuum cleaners. Each room has its own pitfalls, but eating cheese will change our hero's tail into useful tools he can use to avoid catastrophe.

Scrabble—Milton Bradley

Milton Bradley is about to bring out their version of **Scrabble** for GB. Faithful to the board game, the built-in dictionary contains over 30,000 entries to keep you honest. Go against Game Boy or take on a friend. There's not only the game board on-screen, but your letter rack, score panel and timer clock as well. Believe it or not, they've even managed to include sound effects.

Jordan vs. Bird: One on One—Milton Bradley

Who will win the basketball match-up of the century, Air Jordan or the Hick from French Lick? Find out as you take on the computer or challenge a friend in one of three games, including a slam-dunk contest and three-point shootout. Pit your skill against the judge's eye.

Power Mission—NTVIC

Simulate a realistic battle against a powerful enemy force, as you command a modern jet fighter in **Power Mission**. Select and deploy your own fleet—you have seven to choose from—and go after the enemy, using your radar to guide you, then stage your attack with missiles and other high-tech weapons. Each time you win, the enemy rearms and tries to take you out again. There are ten levels to this challenge.

Burai Fighter Deluxe—Taxan

Take on the super Burais in **Burai Fighter Deluxe**. They've created robo-mutants and are out to take over the galaxy. You must penetrate and destroy the Burai's seven manufacturing bases, which means destroying the many evil creatures and foes, including the monstrous super-mutant guarding each base.

THE QUEST FOR

A PLAYERS GUIDE TO ALEX KIDD IN

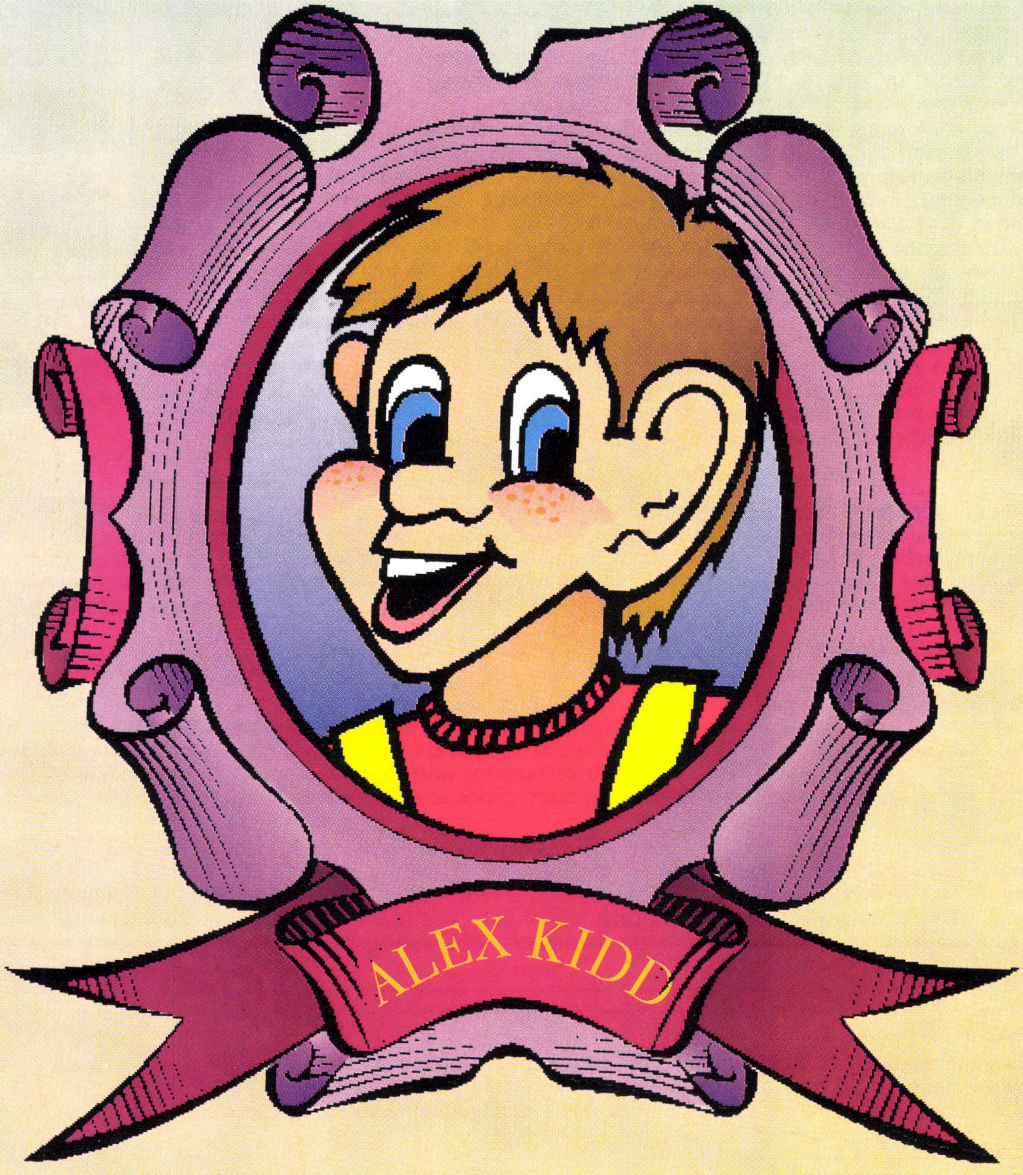


Illustration by Catherine Rundell Dunn

Alex Kidd has sure had his share of adventures! Several Alex Kidd games have been released for the Sega Master System, including Alex Kidd in Miracle World, Alex Kidd: The Lost Stars and Alex Kidd in Hi-Tech World. Now that the Sega Genesis is here, Alex Kidd is continuing his exploits with 16-bit power. Alex Kidd in the Enchanted Castle is similar to Alex Kidd in Miracle World, so if you have played the latter, Enchanted Castle should be as comfortable as an old pair of shoes.

In the following pages, we'll tour the lands through which Alex must travel in his new quest. But keep in mind that this is not an overly difficult game, one that has only a few secrets. Being more arcade than adventure, your control-pad skills are what is important here. Not until you get to Sky Castle are there puzzles to be solved.

All set? Great! Then let's set off for Sky Castle.

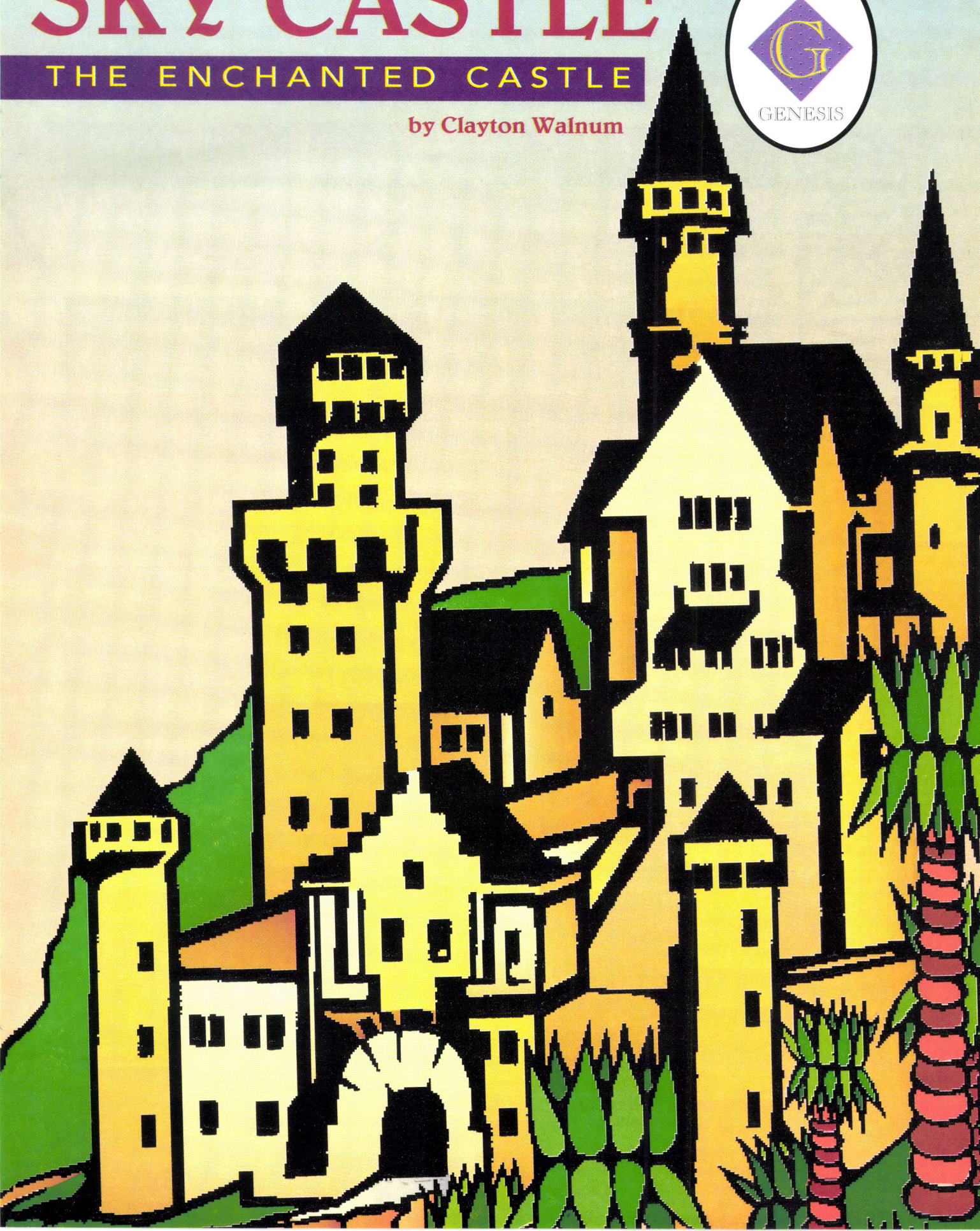
SKY CASTLE

THE ENCHANTED CASTLE

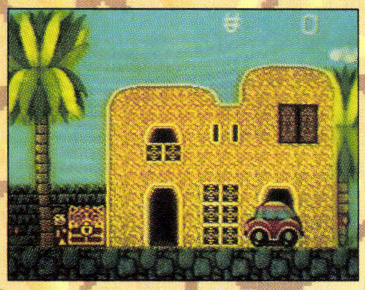
by Clayton Walnum

FOR THE

GENESIS



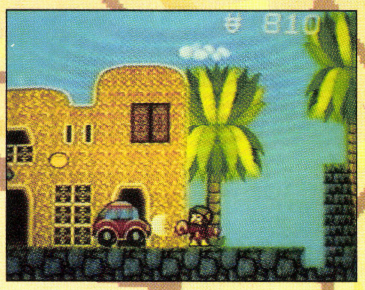
ROUND 1: ROOKIETOWN



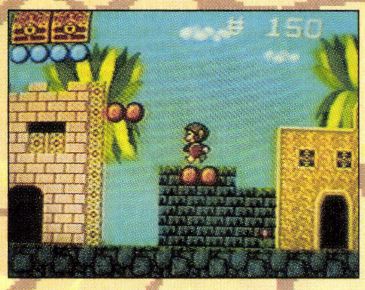
You begin the game in Rookietown.



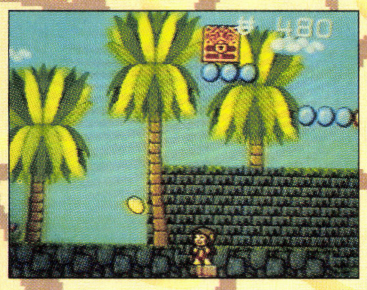
After gathering some gold, come to this shop and buy the ring.



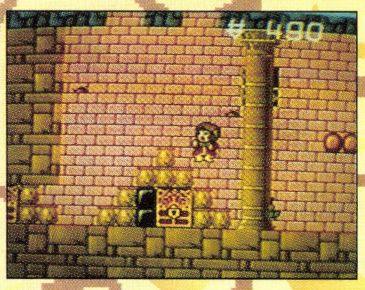
The ring is one of the most valuable items, because it allows you to attack enemies from a distance.



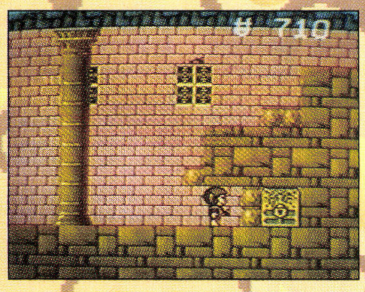
Hop up on the globes in order to reach high treasures.



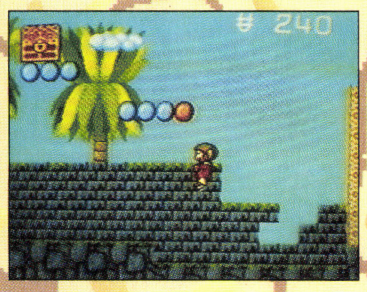
If you jump in just the right place, you'll dig a hole in the ground.



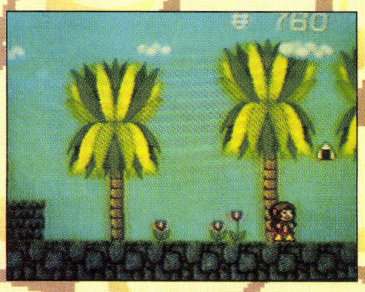
Beneath Rookietown is a mysterious underground chamber filled with treasures.



This treasure box may contain a free life!

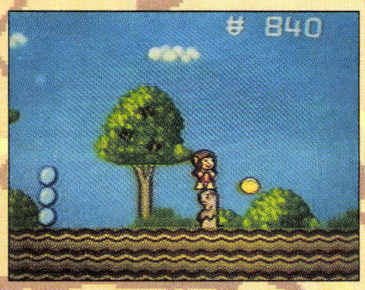


The pogo stick will allow you to reach globes that seem impossibly high.



At the end of each round, grab the rice cake.

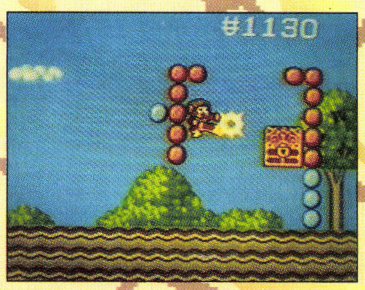
ROUND 2: THE PRAIRIE



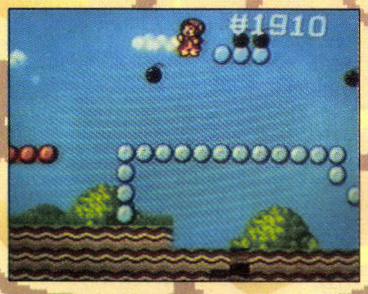
Here, prairie dogs will come up from the ground. You can stand on their heads, but don't bump into them from the front or back. Walk slowly.



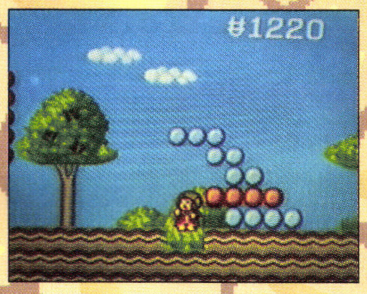
Before leaving the prairie, be sure to buy a pedicopter.



Some enemies must be destroyed with carefully timed jumps and kicks.

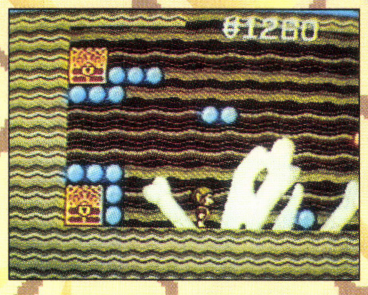


Whenever opening a treasure chest, be prepared to get away from bombs. Not all treasures are good ones.

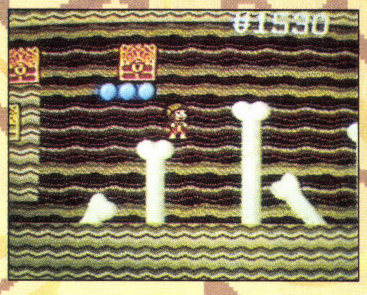


Jump here and you'll dig your way through the ground.

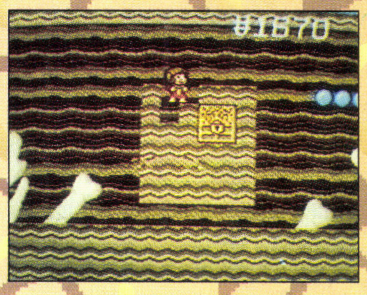




Another underground chamber!



You can stand on some of the bones here. In fact, that's the only way to reach some higher places.

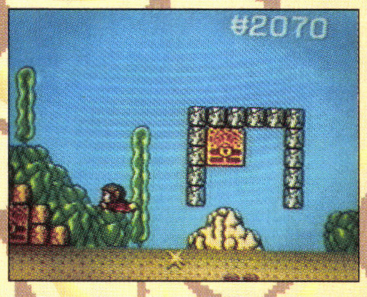


Dig down from the top to get at this treasure chest.

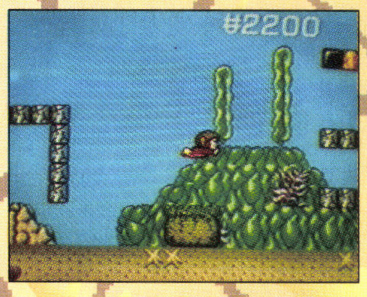
ROUND 3: THE SPLASHY SEA



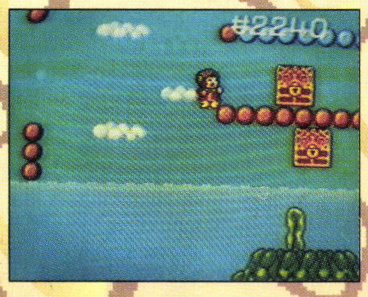
First, use your pedicopter to gather the treasures in the air. This job won't be easy, though. The pedicopter is difficult to control.



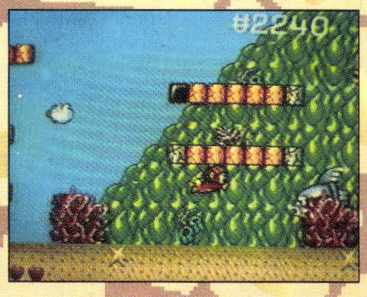
When you fall into the water, you will swim through an ocean scene filled with nice surprises and nasty enemies. The clump of seaweed below



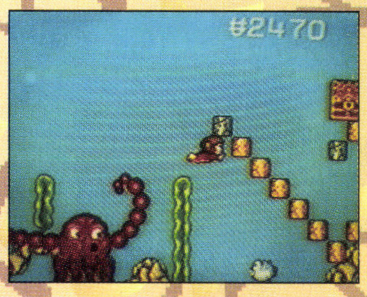
Alex here is actually a doorway to a shop.



You can jump from the water and onto the lower globes.



Controlling Alex underwater is difficult. Sometimes it helps to swim along the bottom of objects, since they keep him from rising.



Destroy this octopus by blasting his tentacles.

continued on page 78

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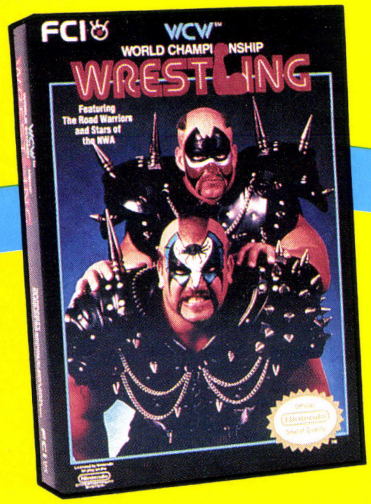
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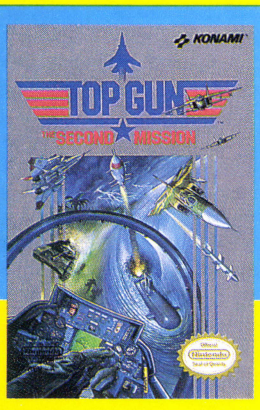


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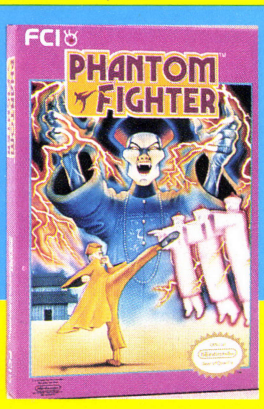
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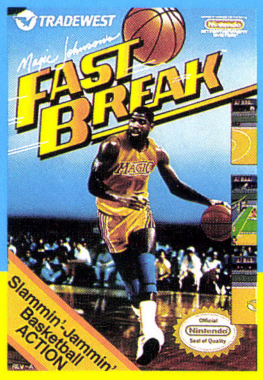
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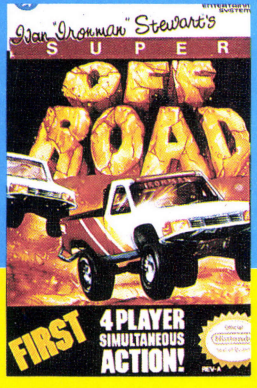
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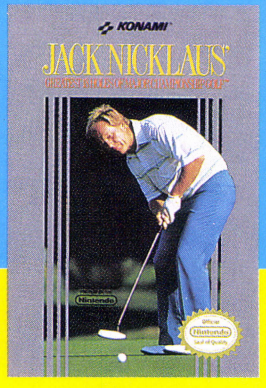
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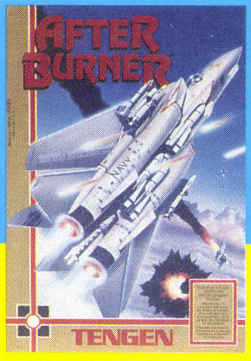
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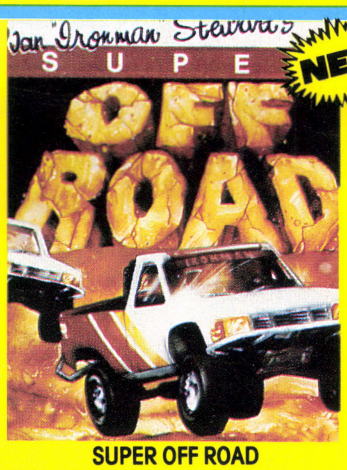
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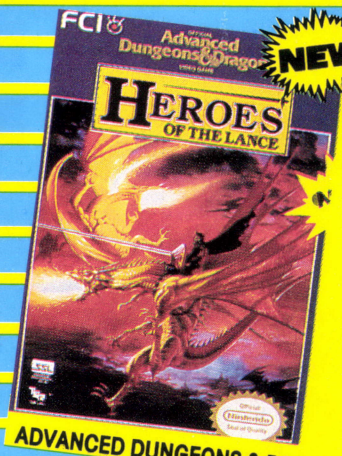
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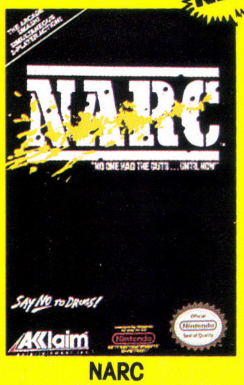
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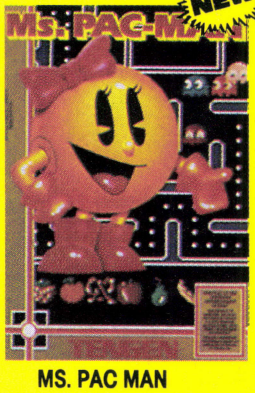
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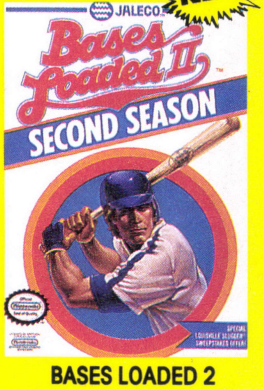
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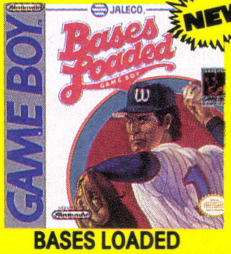
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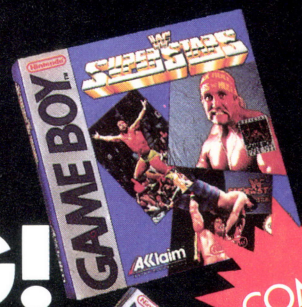
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KWIRK™

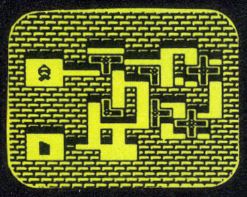
HE'S A-MAZE-ING!



COMING SOON!

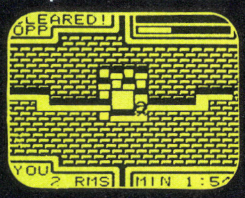


Kwirk's in a bit of a stew. His main squeeze, Tammy, has been trapped, and Kwirk's the only truckin' Tomato with a chance to rescue her. With Kwirk, you'll move bunches of blockers, outwit plenty of pits, and mash through many a maze.



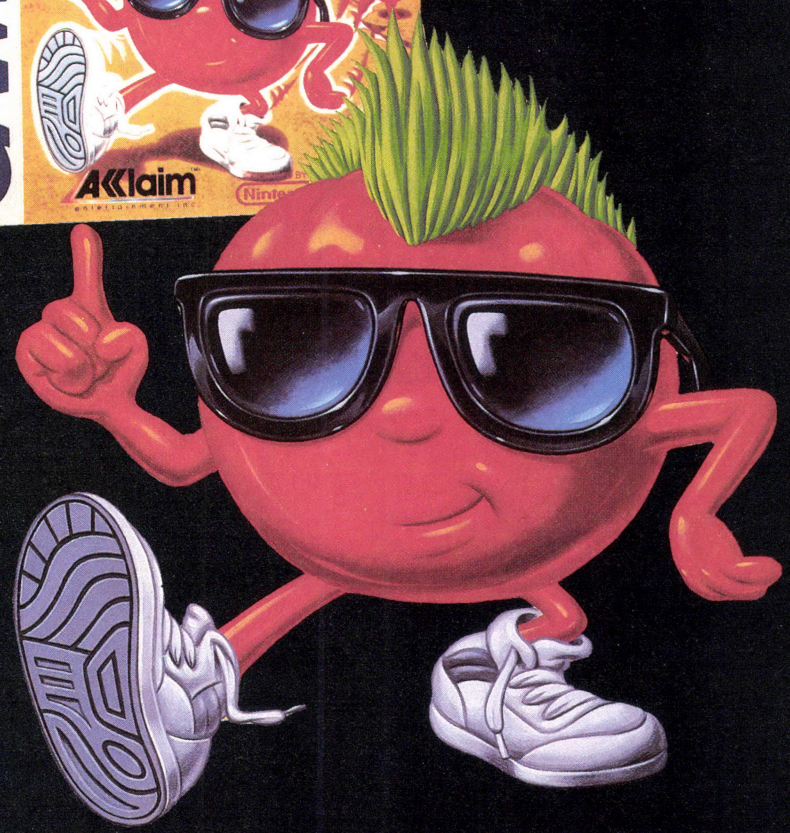
And just when one labyrinth seems to be licked...an even trickier one appears.

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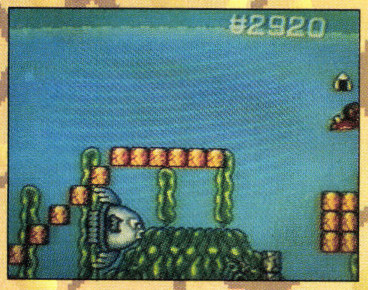
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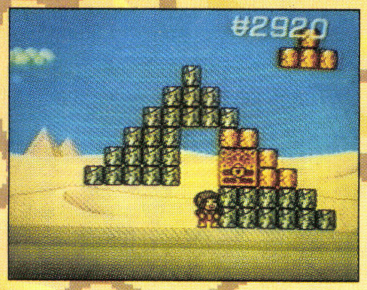
CIRCLE #130 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 73

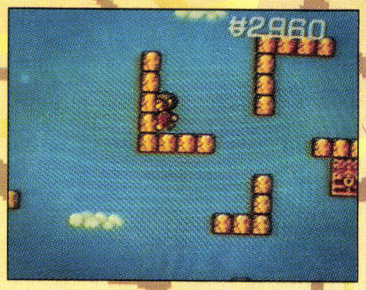
ROUND 4: SCORPION DESERT



Here's the rice cake! On to the next round.



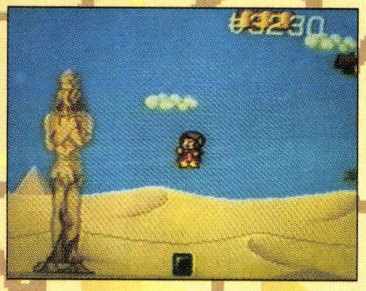
Next stop, Scorpion Desert.



Climb the blocks as high as you can. There are treasures up there.



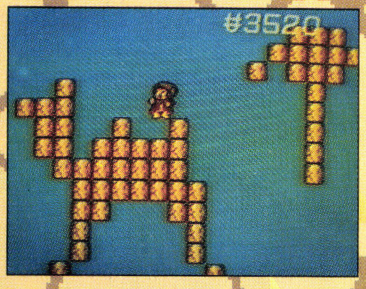
Don't get snagged by the sand beetles. When you pass over them, they come up quickly from below.



Use rubber blocks to jump high into the sky...



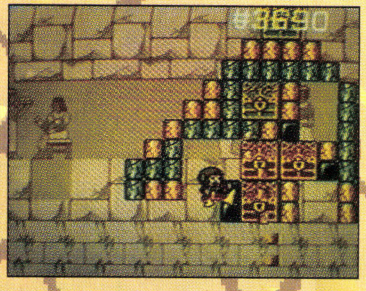
...but watch out for low-flying enemies!



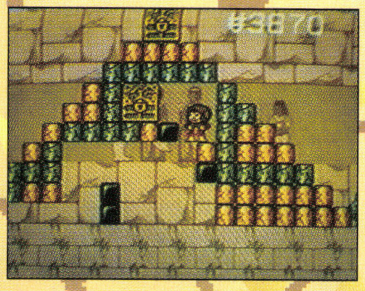
In the sky, you'll find some unusual-looking constructions. What's this? A camel and a palm tree?



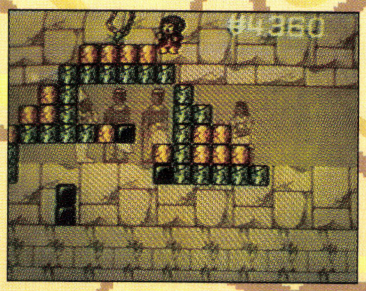
ROUND 5: THE PYRAMID



It may take some tricky maneuvering to get all the treasures here.

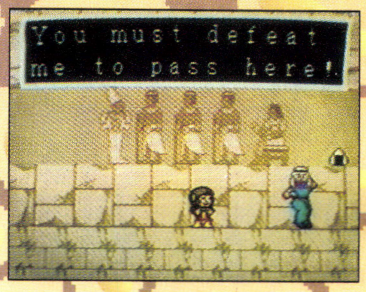


Check out all treasures, but always be prepared for bombs.



A necklace! Now when you play janken, you can read your opponent's mind.

ROUND 6: HIHO FOREST



You have to defeat this Egyptian queen at janken if you want to go on. Use a necklace.



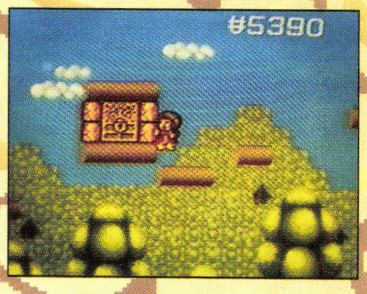
Punch these blocks and send them flying at the Jason lookalikes.



You can send tree trunks flying too.

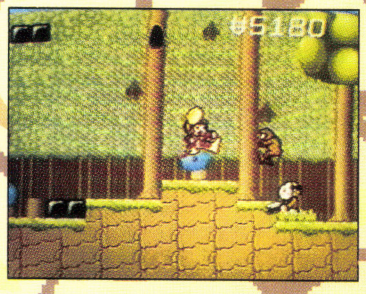


Climb the logs up into the clouds...

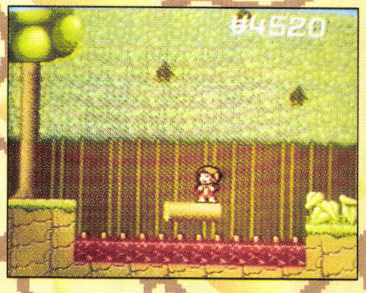


...but don't be surprised when some drop out from beneath you.

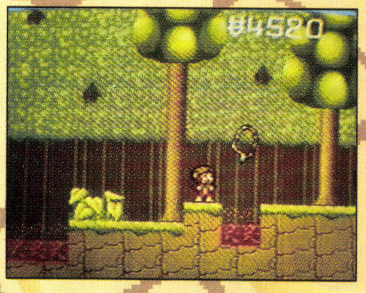




Wait for the monkeys to come down the side of the tree closest to you; then punch them before they get to the ground.



Hop on this moving log for a treacherous trip over hot lava.

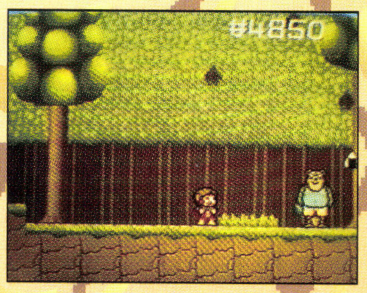


Some treasures here contain valuable prizes. Check them all.

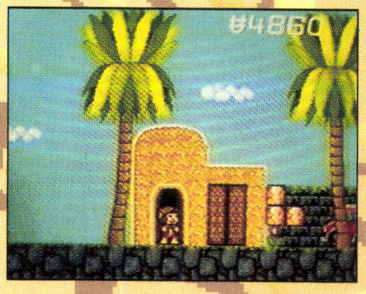
ROUND 7: TROPICS TOWN



Another chest you must dig for.

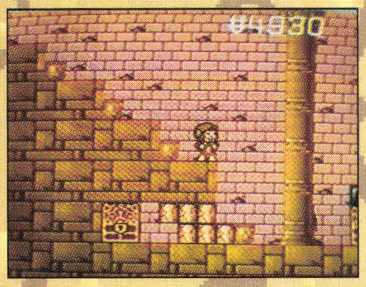


You must beat this guy at janken before he'll let you pass. Hope you have a necklace!

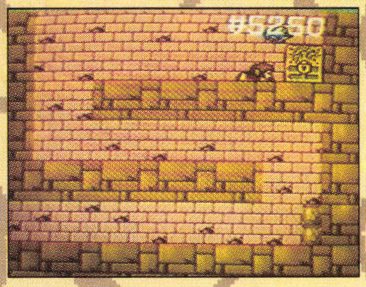


Yep. This city is very similar to Rookietown.

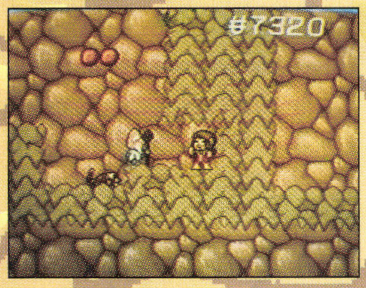
ROUND 7: TROPICS TOWN



It even has an underground chamber.



This chest usually contains a free life.



When you hear a funny warbling sound, be prepared for this old wizard to appear. Don't move. Stay still until he appears in front of you, then punch him out.



This is a huge and confusing level. It'll take you a while to learn your way.

ROUND 8: ROCKY MOUNTAIN #1



The Rocky Mountain area will have you leaping from ledge to ledge.

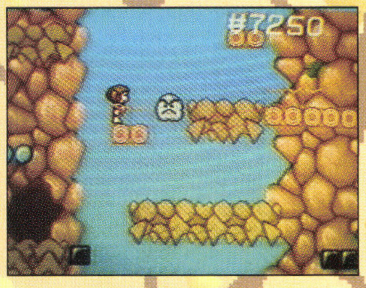


Uh-oh. You have to play another janken game to finish this round.

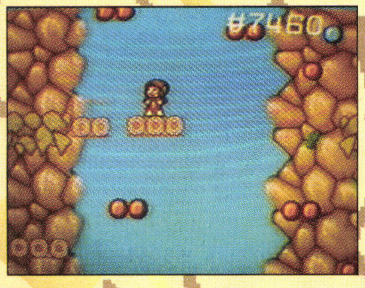
ROUND 9: ROCKY MOUNTAIN #2



Your first stop in Round 9 should be the cave on the left.

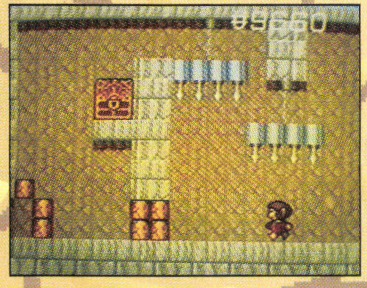


As you climb, watch out for these frowning boulders. They crash down from above.

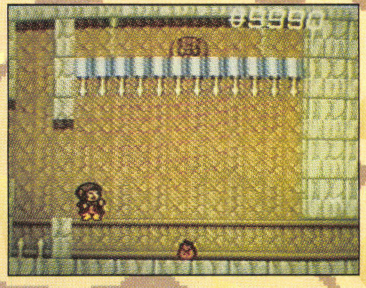


From bridges to globes to ledges, you have a long way to climb.

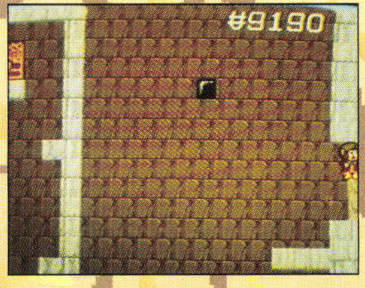
ROUND 11: SKY CASTLE



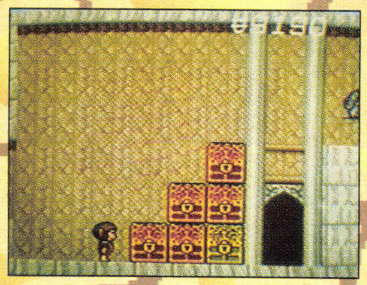
After a very short Round 10 (not shown), you'll wind up in Sky Castle. In this room, you must run to the left and punch out the rocks as fast as you can. Otherwise, the descending spikes will do you in.



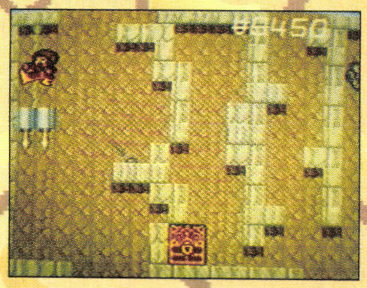
Here you have just enough time to run across the floor and jump over the flame. Don't jump too high, though, or you'll hit the descending spiked ceiling.



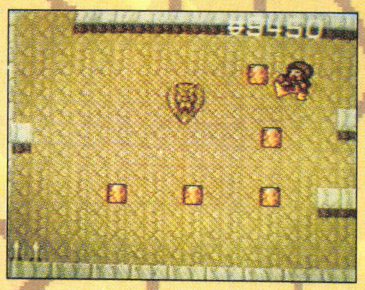
After falling through a trick floor, you'll drop into this vertical passage. Stay to the right, and enter this side corridor. Beware of the block in front of the entrance. It'll drop away as soon as you touch it.



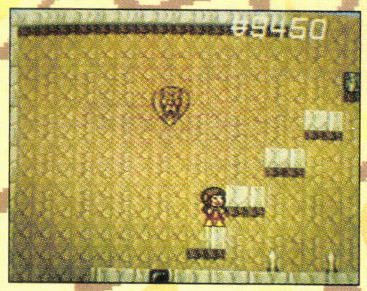
If you take the side passage, you'll find this treasure-filled room.



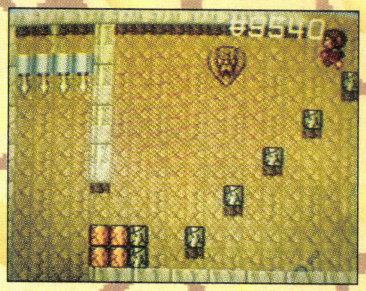
In order to get to the top of this passage, use the lever to trigger the descending spikes. Then use the spikes as stepping stones.



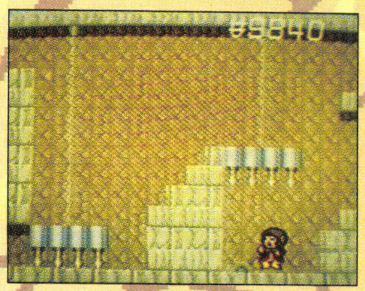
No way out? Of course there is! Kick the blocks to the left and use them as a ladder.



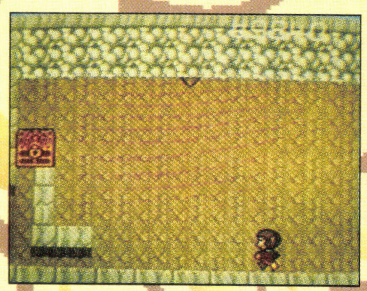
Getting up these steps is tricky. When you jump on them, they break and will drop you right on the spiked floor. Jump onto a step, then immediately walk to your right, onto the second half of the step.



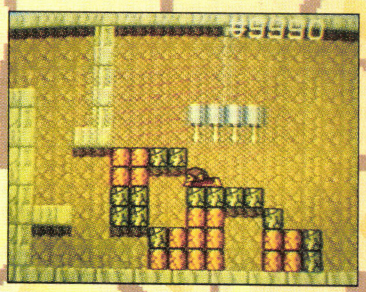
Here, you must drop to the floor and trigger the lever before the descending spikes block your exit. If you fail, jump back up into the room above this one. The spikes will be reset.



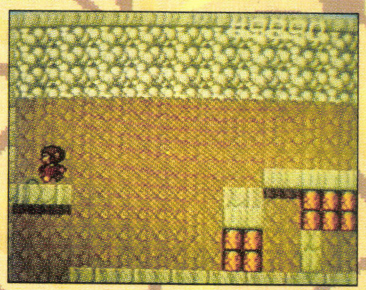
Trigger the lever to raise the spikes in front of the exit. Don't waste any time moving, though, because the spikes above your head will descend at the same time.



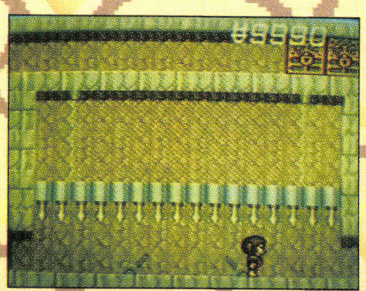
Trying to get this treasure box is suicide. Run across the floor, and crawl beneath the stone blocks. If you're fast enough, the poison gas won't get you.



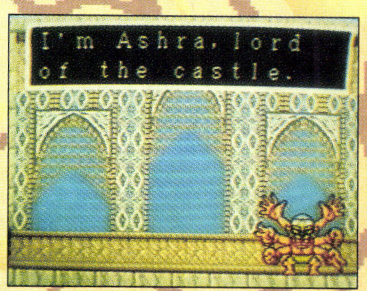
To avoid these spikes, quickly crawl beneath the blocks.



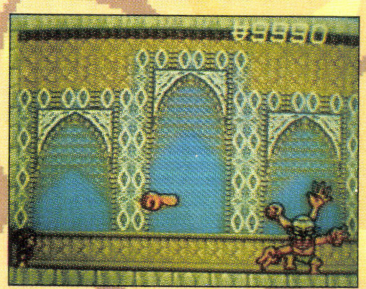
The lever on the left will shut off the poison gas.



The first lever stops the spikes from descending. If you try the second one, you'll be skewered.



It's the Sky Castle boss! First, beat him at janken...



...then battle him to the death, avoiding his flying arms.

TIP SHEET

by Donn Nauert

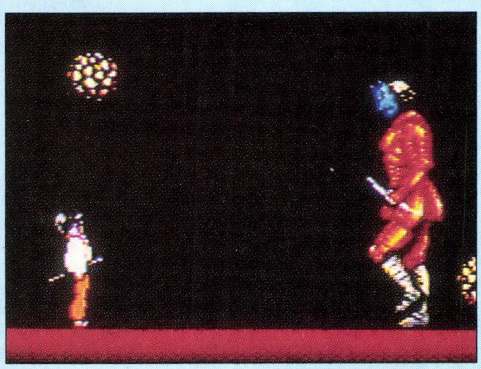
Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed *Tip Sheet* to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: *Tip Sheet*

I purchased *Kenseiden* for the Sega Master System and have not been able to get by the guy who makes rocks fall and shoots shield-type objects. Can you help me maneuver past him?

—Chris Hyde
Elverson, Pennsylvania

There are three stages in defeating Yonensai, the Master. Your first meeting requires you to knock out all the fireballs in order to make the warlock vanish. The next time you face Yonensai, use the helmet-splitting sword, and strike him six or seven times in the face, which will become a bluish skull. At this point, the final stage, you have to hit Yonensai in the skull 10-12 times to defeat him.



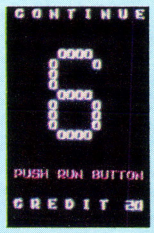


Here's a level select that might help: Before turning on the system, press and hold Buttons 1 and 2. Then turn on the system, and continue to hold 1 and 2 down until the title screen with the figures appears. Release Buttons 1 and 2, then press the top left-hand corner of the directional pad and Button 1. Round select will appear, followed by a number. You can select the level with the directional pad, and push either Button 1 or 2 to start.

Are there any codes or Easter eggs to help me on the TurboGrafx-16 game *R-Type*?

—Ben Treschi
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

The only Easter egg for R-Type *that we presently know of is a way to get more credits for continues. During the title screen, hold down* ***SELECT,*** *and push Button 1 as quickly as possible (or simply place the auto-fire on the highest setting).*



We have been playing *Alf* on the Sega Master system for about two months now and have never seen the end. Is there a code that will allow a continue? Do you have any other helpful advice for this game?

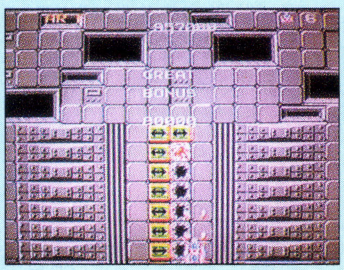
—Eric Anderson and Mike Peck
Phoenix, Arizona

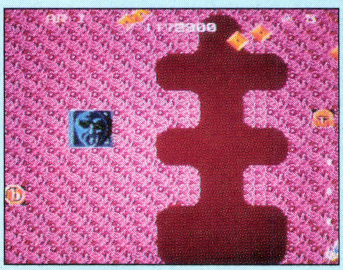
Well, guys, there's no continue that we know of, but if you perform this Easter egg, you don't need one. To get all the items, first get the salami then the cat. Go to the children's bedroom and press ***PAUSE****, then* ***UP*** *and* ***LEFT*** *and Buttons 1 and 2. When you continue play, go to the space scooter and fly to the moon. The rest is up to you.*

Is there a continue, level select or weapon power-up for the game *Starforce*? I've been able to get to the third level, but that's it.

—Clint Olson
Canyon, Texas

We had a chance to talk to one of the programmers for this game, perhaps the toughest shooter ever made. He confirmed that there are no Easter eggs like the one you mentioned. There is, however, a hidden icon (Cleopatra) that will give you a 1-million-point bonus when hit. Cleo can usually be found in Area Kappa, in the pink area near the lappa. She's on the right side and very easy to miss.

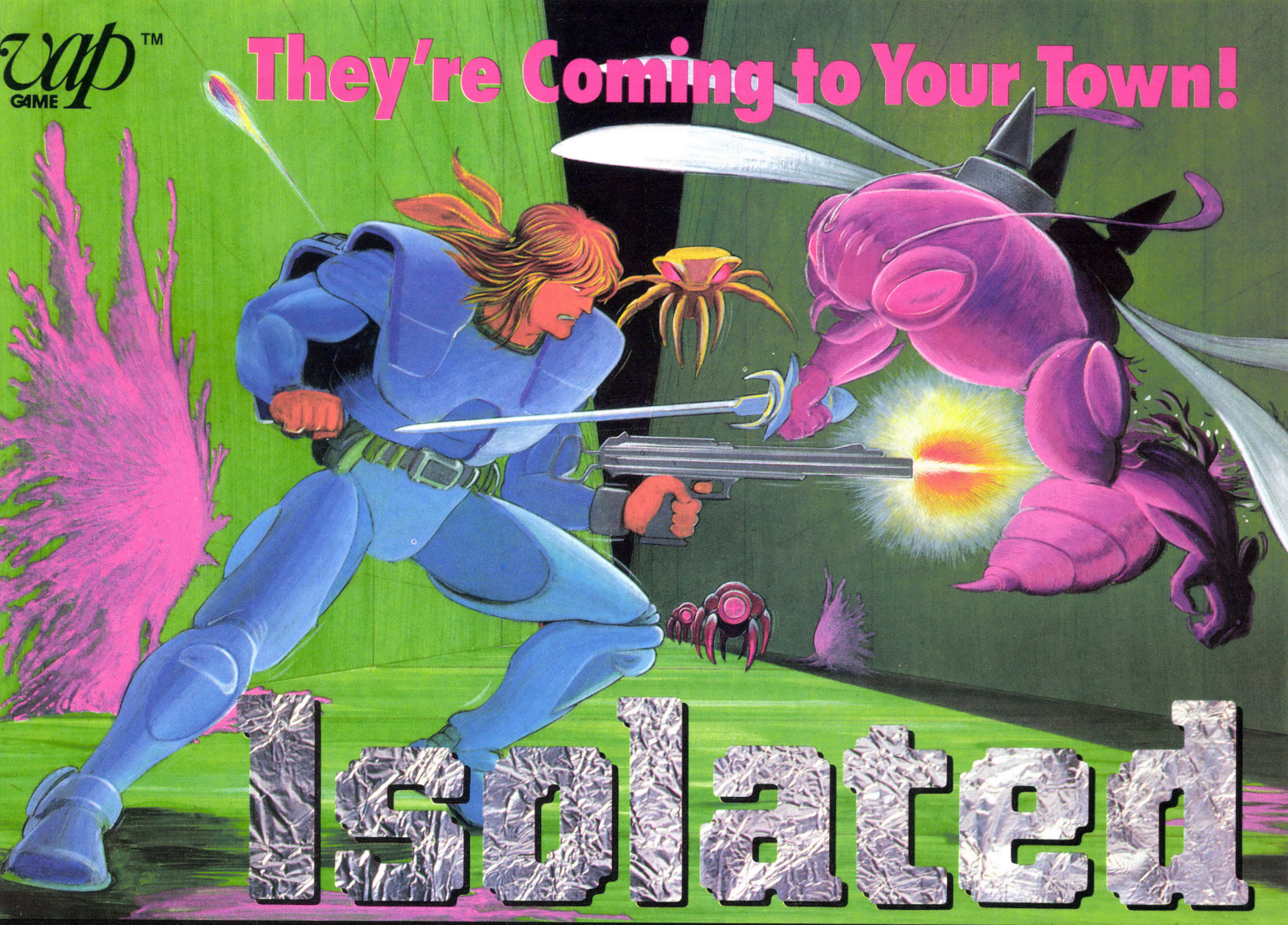




CIRCLE #131 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

VAP GAME™

They're Coming to Your Town!



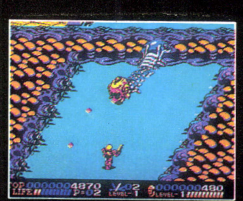
Isolated Warrior™

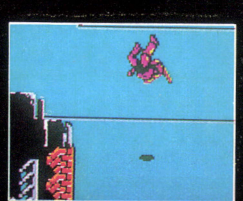
You are Max Maverick, a trainee of an elite combat troop who must put on your battle suit and face the creatures. With skill and wit, you courageously do your best to defeat the enemy!

A Power- Charged 3D Screen, Exciting Full Sound Effects, Over 40 Types of Powerful Enemy Creatures and Realistic Screen Graphics!









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Super C

(Konami for the NES)

If you want to hear all the sounds of this sci-fi thriller, just hold A and B then press START a couple of times during the title screen. You'll get to sample all the spacey effects.

Also, if you'd like to start the game with ten men, during the title screen press R, L, D, A, B, then START. You'll also receive ten men every time you continue.







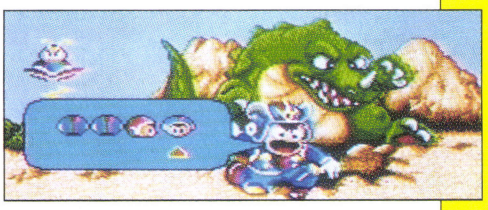
Crater Maze

(NEC for the TurboGrafx-16)

Here's a code that will let you play Rounds 1-60 on the difficult and expert settings: The first head should be blue facing away, the second head should be blue facing away, the third head should be red facing right and the fourth head should be blue facing the front.

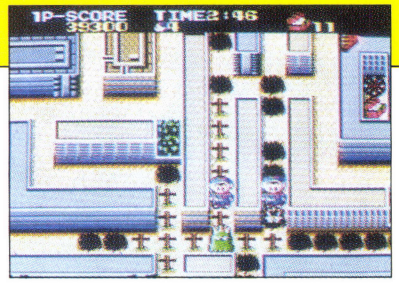


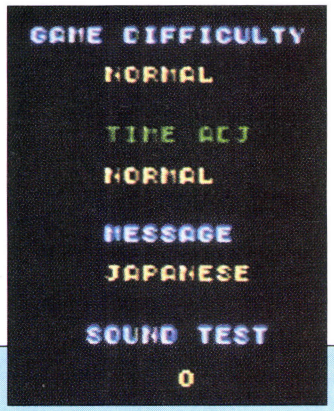




To get the "Hu" card worth 10,000 points, you must dig 255 holes.

To get the NEC icon worth 20,000 points, you must retrieve all treasures in the round, without killing an enemy. Another way to get free men is to kill 64 enemies to create 64 tombstones.





Super Hang-On

(Sega for the Genesis)

This game offers a unique way to learn Japanese through video games. To change the messages from English to Japanese, hold down A and B then press C twice. A screen will appear that will allow you to choose the difficulty, the time, language and enter a sound test as well. Thanks to Kenny Kupelian of Santa Barbara, California, for sending in this Easter egg.

Mean Streets

Mean Streets is truly an advanced interactive adventure experience.

It's the year 2033. Your name is Tex Murphy, private investigator in San Francisco. You've been hired by the beautiful daughter of a university professor to uncover the facts about her father's death.

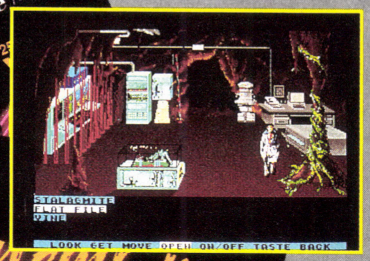
As you begin your investigation, you uncover the deaths of several prominent members of the scientific community. Are these deaths coincidental, or is something more sinister going on?

- You will interact with more than 27 characters which animate and respond to questions, bribes and threats.
- Some characters actually talk. This spectacular effect is achieved by synchronizing digitized animation with *Real Sound* ™.
- You'll crack high-tech security systems.
- You'll rummage through offices, warehouses, and factories as you search for vital clues.
- You'll risk your life in action-packed shootouts.

Mean Streets features *Real Sound* ™, our own proprietary technology that allows MS-DOS computers to play high quality digitized sound effects, music and speech WITHOUT HARDWARE.

ACTUAL 256 COLOR VGA SCREENS





Mean Streets has set a new standard for interactive adventure games!
—R. A. Frisk
Sugarland, Texas

Beautiful! A new step ahead in computer entertainment.
—M. A. Platnick
Bluefield, WV

Mean Streets is a major technical breakthrough for the I.B.M.
—Electronic Gamer

Mean Streets is a dazzling product! A showpiece game for VGA machines.
—Video Games and Computer Entertainer

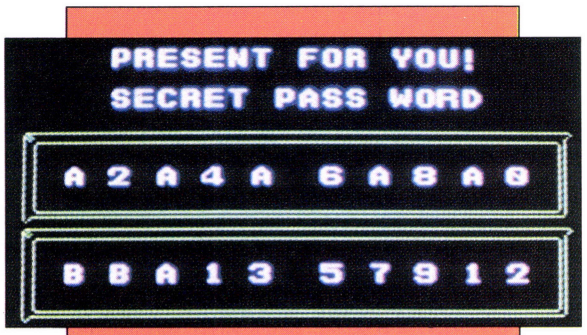
Mean Streets' Real Sound's quality of music, voice & special effects beats anything I've heard from my "Ad Lib"™...hands down!
—H. Nichols
CPAA

Animating digitized images and synchronizing them with great voice and sound simulation for IBM P.C. make Mean Streets more realistic than anything you may already have experienced. To call Mean Streets just another computer game is an understatement!
—Game Player's Strategy

545 WEST 500 SOUTH, BOUNTIFUL, UTAH 84010
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ACCESS SOFTWARE INCORPORATED

CIRCLE #132 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Xexyz

(Hudson Soft for the NES)

Here's a code that will place you on Round 7 with some powerful weapons:

C8825DC091

If you want to play only the even-numbered flying rounds, input this code:

A2A4A6A8A0

Or try this code to go up against the end boss of each round:

BBA1357912

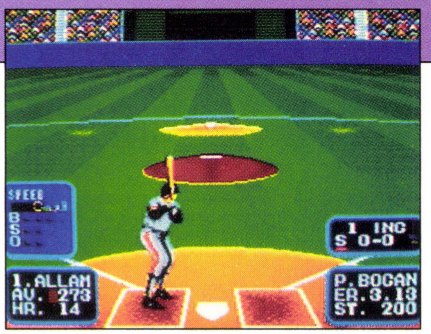
Tommy Lasorda Baseball

(Sega for the Genesis)

Here's a password that will give the computer an invisible team. You won't be able to play but it's an interesting tip:

Zb6jpqrnmGnYWQXaHuFFAB

Jason Roberts of Corinth, Mississippi, is the author of this unusual code.



Neutopia

(NEC for the TurboGrafx-16)

If you'd like to start off in Round 4, the sky, input this password:

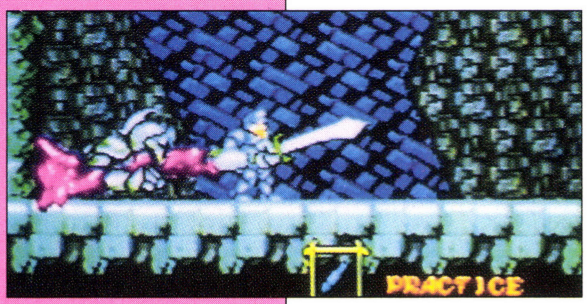
KgKc%h5oFfep
Qy1XwcjZXDVn



Ghouls 'n' Ghosts

(Sega for the Genesis)

Here are some great Easter eggs for this now-classic Genesis game:



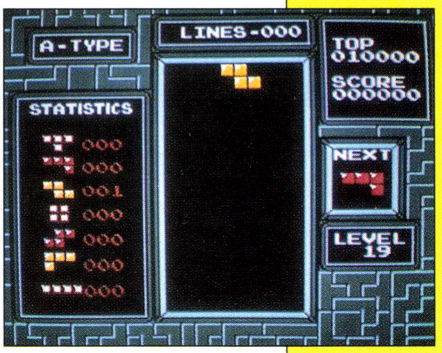
If you would like to become invincible, press U, A, D, A, L, A, R. If you hear a musical note, you've done this segment correctly. After you hear the note, press and hold the B button then press **START**. Release the B button, and press and hold the C button, then press START. You'll be able to run through the enemies, but if you fall off ledges or get trapped off-screen you'll lose a life.

To play in slow motion, press U, A, D, A, L, A, R during the title screen. If you hear a musical note, you've done it right. After pressing R, press START repeatedly until Arthur comes onto the screen. Then press START (to pause the action) and hold down B. You should now be able to control Arthur in slow motion.

TETRIS

(Nintendo for the NES)

Have you ever wondered just how fast *Tetris* can get? Well, try this. After selecting Game A, the level-select screen appears. Move the prompt to the level you would like to play, then hold A and press **START**. Instead of starting on Level 9, you'll now start off on Level 19. And, yes, it is *fast*.



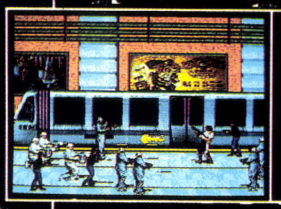
Thanks to Derek Thom of Groton, Connecticut, for this Easter egg.

CRIME WAVE











ACTUAL 256 COLOR VGA SCREENS

Real Sound™

A powerful crime syndicate has taken over large areas of our major cities turning them into vast criminal wastelands.

Arson, extortion, drug distribution, murder and now...terrorist abduction! You have just learned that they have taken the U.S. President's daughter and are holding her and our country hostage.

YOU'VE HAD A GUT-FULL! . . . **YOUR PURPOSE:** To wipe out this criminal organization and rescue the president's daughter. Even with the most sophisticated Assault Technology available, it won't be easy. You are the only one that can save the country from this sinister infestation . . .

Bring arcade action home like never before!

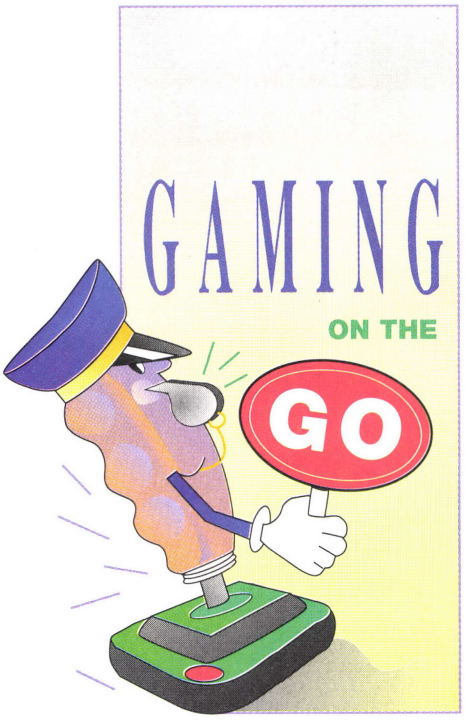
Crime Wave, with *Real Sound*™ and 256 color digitized VGA graphics, puts you on the streets for real!

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CIRCLE #119 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

GAMING ON THE GO



by
MAURICE MOLYNEAUX

We're free! At last, video-game playing has been liberated from the confines of the family room and the TV set. Thanks to modern technology, we can now carry our video-game consoles in our hands.

Granted, handheld electronic games aren't anything new. LCD games have been available for years from companies such as Tiger, Konami and Acclaim. However, it's only recently that handheld games have begun to approach the flexibility of the cartridge-based game consoles that we play on our television sets.

Right now there are two major players in the field of portable cartridge-based game systems: Nintendo's Game Boy and Atari's Lynx. Looming on the horizon are portable versions of the TurboGrafx-16, a possible handheld NES-compatible and more! So, with the world of portable gaming taking off, the editors of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT decided it prudent to devote a column to this subject. Here it is.

Since the Game Boy was previewed and reviewed in previous issues of VG&CE, this first *Gaming on the Go* column will cover the Game Boy's first competitor: the much talked about Atari Lynx.

Comparing the Game Boy to the Lynx is a little like comparing apples and kiwis, as they occupy different extremes in the handheld sweepstakes. The Lynx retails for fully twice the price of the Game Boy ($179 versus $89), and that difference in price about sums up the difference between the two units. If the Game Boy is your basic 50-mpg car, the Lynx is a Lincoln Continental.

As for likenesses, both machines are fully portable and can be run on either batteries *or* from a power adapter—an optional accessory for the Game Boy, but included with the Lynx. Both feature volume and contrast controls, connectors for linking multiple machines together for multiplayer games and a jack for connecting headphones for private listening.



The Atari Lynx running **Chip's Challenge,** *an intense puzzle game.*

As for differences, the Game Boy features a nonbacklit black-and-white screen, only 1 3/4" x 1 1/2" square, whereas the Lynx comes equipped with a backlit 3" x 1 7/8" *color* display. Furthermore, while you can hook two Game Boys together, word has it that up to *16* Lynxes can be hooked up at once (if a game supports a like number of players). The Lynx comes complete with an AC adapter for nonbattery use, as well as a COMLYNX cable used for hooking up your Lynx to another.

The Lynx has an excellent design. Although considerably larger than the Game Boy (almost exactly twice the size), it tips the scales at only one pound (sans batteries) and feels comfortable in your hands. The eight-direction joypad and both sets of "A" and "B" buttons are well placed: the joypad to the left of the screen, the buttons to the top- and bottom-right (surrounding the console speaker). Of course, if you're a southpaw, this isn't designed for you; but simultaneously pressing the **PAUSE** and **OPTION 2** buttons causes the Lynx screen image to rotate 180 degrees, so, when you turn the Lynx over to put the image right-side up, the controls are reversed.

The screen is the best part of the Lynx. The display is a good size and *beautiful*, capable of simultaneously displaying 16 colors out of a palette of 4,096 possible hues. The resolution is about 1/4 that of a computer like the Atari ST, but on such a small screen, it's more than adequate. The graphics are bright and easy to look at—no eye strain here. Furthermore, the Lynx hardware is capable of churning out data at an incredible 16 megahertz (quicker than many home computers), allowing for fast play and rapid updating of screen graphics. The Lynx includes hardware routines for automatic rotation and rescaling of objects, allowing rapid shifts of perspective and zooms. In fact, the packaged *California Games* features an excellent example of this, as the screen quickly and smoothly zooms in and out on the player's character during the half-pipe skateboarding event.

Since the Lynx display is an LCD (liquid crystal display) screen, a brightness control is included so that you can adjust the image to project correctly at whatever angle you're viewing it. If you move the Lynx appreciably during play, the image will appear to either darken or lighten, depending on how much you tilt the machine. Fortunately, the screen is self-illuminated (backlit), so, if someone steps into your light and casts a shadow on your Lynx's screen, you will not be forced to readjust the brightness. This is something that cannot be said for the nonilluminated screen of the Game Boy, which depends on room lighting.

The Lynx screen performs amazingly well in a wide variety of lighting conditions. It's weakest in bright light, particularly direct sunlight, where the illumi-



Casino Kid™



Wall Street Kid™

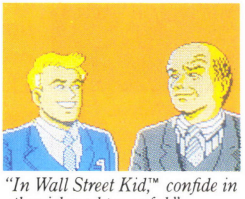
GET READY TO DEAL.



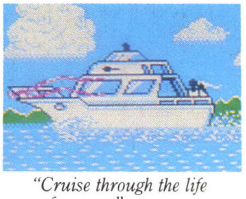
"Casino Kid,™ where skill and luck are what it takes to win."



"The non-stop casino action of the strip."



"In Wall Street Kid,™ confide in the rich and powerful."



"Cruise through the life of success."

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Take a gamble with the high stakes game Casino Kid,™ where blackjack and poker skills are your tools of success. Take the upper hand as you're dealt inside tips in order to make thousands at the tables. What's wrong with a little greed?

If the fast track of Wall Street is more your speed, achieve fame and fortune in Wall Street Kid.™ Deal with the stock-market giants in this *life simulation* game. Remember, to inherit billions, invest your time and money wisely.

Now, are you ready to deal?

SOFEL™
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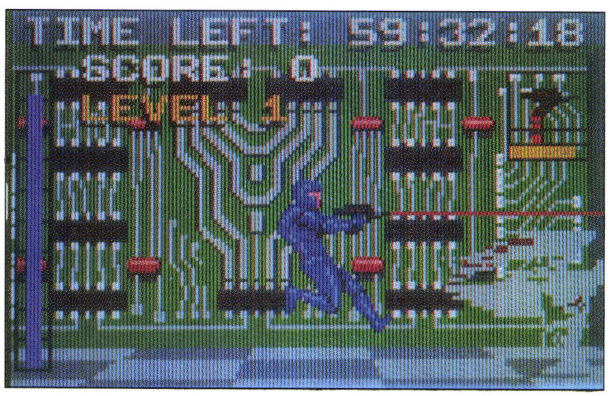
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CIRCLE #133 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

nated screen can be overpowered if held at the wrong angle. Indoors, however, I've never experienced any problems whatsoever, and the screen works wonderfully in a pitch-black room.

The Lynx features great sound, courtesy of a four-channel, 32-bit audio processor. The console speaker is adequate, but the audio sounds much better through a good pair of headphones (you can use any pair that features a miniature stereo plug) or through a pair of Bose speakers (as I discovered when I plugged the Lynx into my stereo system)! Unfortunately, since I'm the first Lynx owner on my block, I haven't yet been able to use the COMLYNX feature to try a two-player contest. My COMLYNX cable sits idly in its box.

A portable system can only be truly portable if it's free from power adapters and wall sockets. The Lynx can be run from either the supplied AC adapter, a properly equipped car cigarette-lighter adapter or from batteries. The latter allows the ultimate in portability, but at a cost. The Lynx draws a lot of power for its color screen, requiring *six* AA batteries, and the average life expectancy of these batteries is only about four hours. Therefore, if you're serious about lugging your Lynx around, perhaps buying a battery charger and some rechargeable nicad batteries is the way to go. Personally, I keep the Lynx power adapter in the living room and usually plug the machine in there for most uses. I run it on batteries only when I have to.



ElectroCop, *a 3-D maze battle for the Atari Lynx that shows off the graphic capabilities of this portable game machine.*

Fortunately, the Lynx is smart enough to keep you from accidentally running down batteries. If you leave it on and unattended for four minutes on battery power, it will shut itself off. On AC-adapter power, it'll shut itself off after an hour of nonuse.

Lynx game cards are $2^1/_2$" x 2" x $^1/_8$" wafers. The machine's card port is concealed behind a hinged door to the bottom-left of the machine. When the door is opened, a small slot can be seen. The door closes over the card, making it virtually impossible to accidentally pull it out in the middle of a game. Inserting a game card is easy; removing one is only slightly more complicated.

Lynx software is limited at this juncture. In addition to the packaged *California Games*, there are five other titles available: *ElectroCop*, *Blue Lightning*, *Chip's Challenge*, *Gauntlet: The Third Encounter* and *The Gates of Zendocon*. Several other games are in the pipeline at this time. Atari Corp. and Epyx, the latter designed the Lynx, had a well-attended Lynx developer conference in late 1989, which would seem to indicate that a number of developers plan to generate games for the Lynx. Most Lynx games will sell for between $30 and $35.

As we noted, the Lynx comes packaged with Epyx's *California Games*. This card contains four California sports: BMX bike racing, surfing, half-pipe skateboarding and foot bag. All of the events feature excellent graphics and good sound, including two "title" musical sequences and individual themes for each event. The biggest problem with *California Games* is the instruction manual, which is downright shoddy. The descriptions of the events are lame, and in some cases it's hard to figure out exactly what you're supposed to be doing. Worst of all are the directions for the half-pipe skateboarding event, which state: "To perform a stunt, move the joypad as shown in the diagram." The trouble is, *there's no diagram for the joypad positions for this event!* There *is* a diagram indicating the "A" and "B" button functions, but no diagram for the joypad.

Both the surfing and foot bag events can be played by two players (providing you have two Lynxes). The instructions don't say anything about two-player modes for the BMX bike racing and half-pipe skateboarding events, so one has to assume they're for single players only.

Of the four events, I would rank surfing as the most fun, followed by the BMX event, foot bag and finally, the half-pipe event. The last competition is the hardest to control and the most difficult to get a grasp on, due to the flaws in the manual.



The BMX Bicycling event in* California Games *for the Atari Lynx.

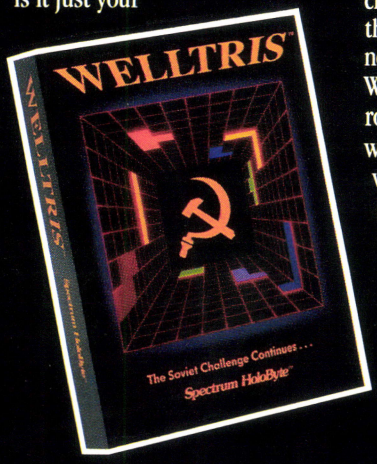
Overall, the Lynx is a joy to play with. I've used it in the car, the bedroom, outdoors, in the bathroom (*not* in the tub!) and even when working with my computers. Best of all, despite its small size and portability, the Lynx is every bit as powerful and capable as many of the home video-game consoles. In fact, it's *more* powerful than almost all of the older home systems. No sacrificing good games, graphics and sound for portability here. The Lynx also attracts people like flies to honey. Everyone, old and young, who caught me playing with the Lynx was rightly impressed. Play one in public, and people will just stop and stare at you.

The final question, if you're interested in buying a handheld video game, is whether you should go with the Lynx or the Game Boy. It's a tough call. I prefer the Lynx in many ways because of its larger screen and color graphics. However, the Game Boy is a good machine and considerably less expensive. Even when you add the price of the AC adapter, the Game Boy is only about two-thirds the price of the $179 Lynx. (Initially, the Lynx sold for about $159, $20 cheaper than today. However, the price of the color LCD screens used by the Lynx went up, and Atari was forced to pass on the additional price to you, the gamer. There have been rumors that Atari is looking to redesign the Lynx to be more compact and utilize a less expensive screen, which would probably, and unfortunately, be a more dinky proposition than the current one.)

Game availability is also likely to be a major factor in your decision. There is little doubt that the Game Boy will have plenty of games available. And, although the Lynx is an excellent machine, it remains to be seen how much third-party support Atari and Epyx can drum up for this little wonder. Hopefully, a lot, because the Lynx represents a quantum leap in handheld gaming technology, and it *deserves* to be a success.

ANOTHER SOVIET CHALLENGE OF NEW DIMENSIONS - WELLTRIS

Step into another dimension! Is this pit of falling WELLTRIS™ pieces really drawing you down into its very depths or is it just your imagination? In this latest Soviet mind teaser Alexey Pajitnov, the designer of the award-winning TETRIS™ challenge, transports us into the next dimension. There's a new angle at every turn. WELLTRIS pieces can be rotated within each wall, as well as around the four outer walls while falling deeper into the pit. With three difficulty levels containing five speeds each, few will be able to master the challenge. There is no escape—if TETRIS didn't get you, WELLTRIS will!



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WARNING: Publisher cannot be held responsible for addictive tendencies developing in WELLTRIS players.

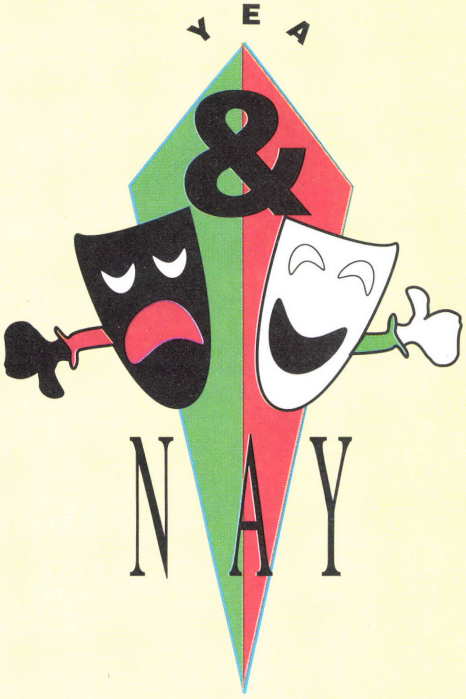
Available on IBM, Macintosh, and Amiga.

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CIRCLE #134 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Yea & Nay provides an inside look at the high and low points of the electronic-game industry. We'll decide what games deserve a pat on the back or a slam to the mat for what they do.

It's an opportunity for you to give credit where credit is due—whether the company belongs in the Hall of Fame or Hall of Shame—send your opinions to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: Yea & Nay. Give us an earful!



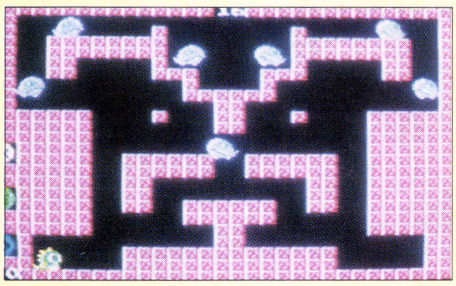
NAY



We've been receiving complaints here at VG&CE for a while about the lack of games designed with the female gamer in mind. This seems especially true recently. Most games are redundant punch-and-kick contests or fly-and-shoot battles; not much exists for the fairer sex to get interested in.

Pac-Man, Bubble Bobble, even *Centipede* and *Millipede,* to an extent, were hits with the ladies. Where are the relatively nonviolent, and imaginative, games now? And sorry, Tecmo's *Bad News Baseball,* with its "Girls Mode"—which is accompanied by little hearts—isn't what we had in mind in the way of game software for females.

Sure, the current female game market isn't that large a segment to concentrate on, but maybe changing strategy would make a difference in the number of female gamers out there. What do you say software publishers?



YEA



We're getting word that NEC is getting its act together on the TurboGrafx-16 game system. Up until now we've received comments and complaints from readers that the TG-16 TV commercials on TV don't display enough of the games, the software's box art is pitiful and NEC is worried that the TG-16 won't last in the marketplace against the Genesis.

Having witnessed the popularity of the PC Engine (the TG-16's Japanese father) overseas and the quality of its software library, we're confident that the system can succeed in America. As we go to press, NEC is finalizing details with a new advertising agency, and the game boxes are making headway—indeed, they should do justice to the look of the games that they're intended to sell. And speaking of software, lots of TG-16 product is hitting the shelves, offering players much variety.

We ask all video gamers to give NEC a second chance and to look seriously at the TG-16. We think it will be a mainstay for years to come.

YEA



Progress. That's what we like to see, and that's what we're getting with some of the latest "generation" of computer games. *Mean Streets, Crime Wave* (both Access), *David Wolf: Secret Agent, A-10 Tank Killer* (both Dynamix) and *It Came From the Desert* (Cinemaware) all feature digitized action, instead of computer-generated sprites, which provides more of a cinematic appearance. Similarly, having high-res graphics available on computers that can adequately display them—such as the Amiga or the VGA mode on an IBM PC—is a real visual treat; some graphics look almost lifelike.

As our *Best Games of 1989* awards demonstrated—*David Wolf* and *A-10 Tank Killer* both took home kudos, and we expect that the 1990 lists will include more games with digitized graphics—this is an expanding trend, and a welcome one. We're also excited about the prospect that this technology will show up on video-game consoles, namely the TurboGrafx-16 system. Thanks to its CD-ROM unit, the TG-16 will soon host *It Came From the Desert.* What's next?



NAY



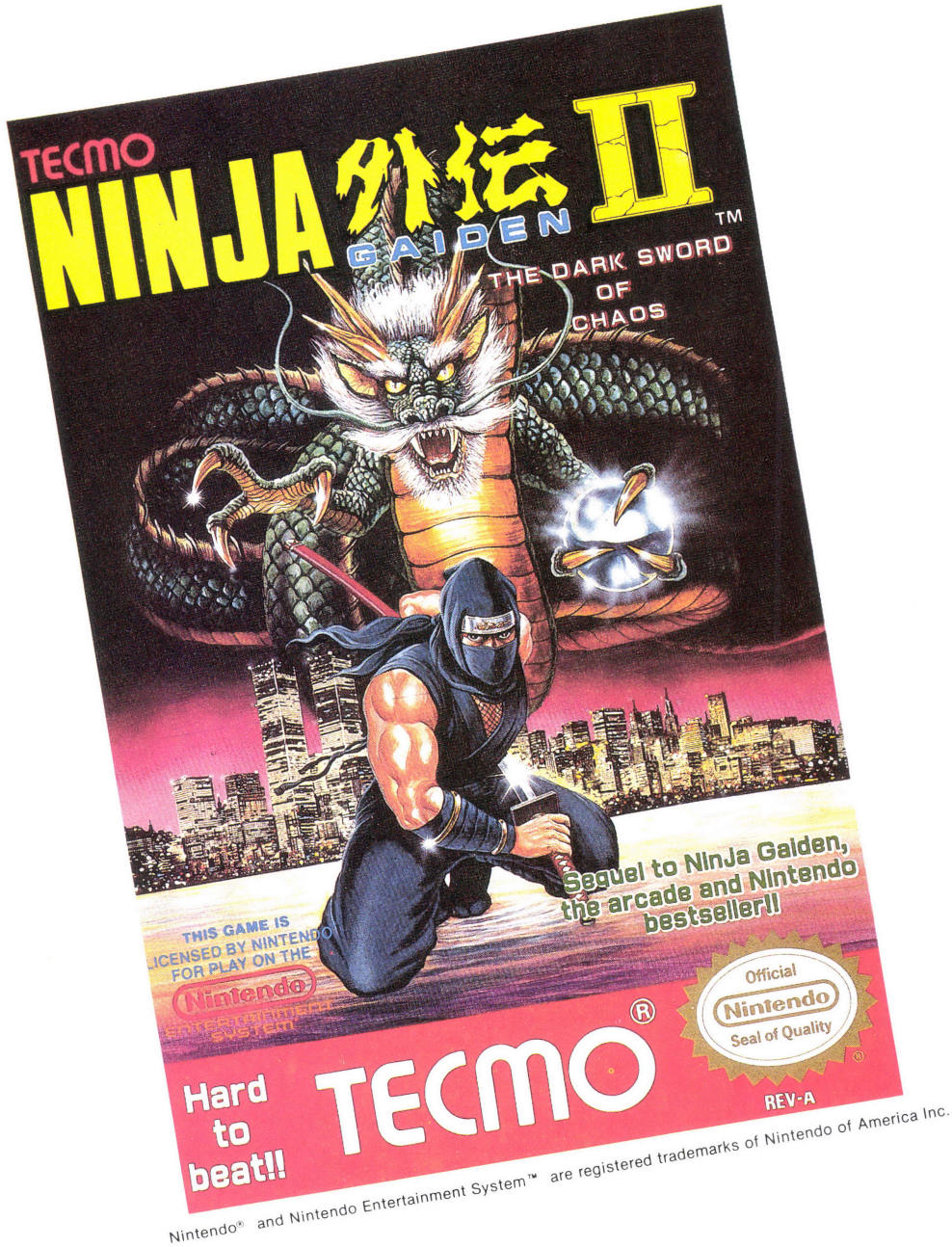
Though our *Letter From the Editor* alludes to problems at the Nintendo World Championships, we'd also like to give a big nay to Nintendo for the way it set up the NWC. It doesn't appear to be designed for the player, but instead seems to be intended as a vehicle to further boost Nintendo's visibility and finances.



Though one of the better features of the event is the ability to view new games prior to their release, we're getting reports that games are being frequently turned off to discourage players from staying too long at one console. Furthermore, our experience at the Dallas staging of the NWC showed no evidence of formal rules for competitors; signs that were supposed to identify games were missing; and players were being charged a substantial amount of money to enter and compete (about $13 per day to get in and approximately $3 for each competition entry).

Now we're not saying that Nintendo should give *all* its profits back to the customers, but it is doing extremely well with the NES and other associated revenues. It seems like there would be a better way to thank those folks who've used their wallets to support its climb to the top of the video-game hill.

AWESOME!



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Snow Brothers: Nick and Tom

by Romstar



Snow Brothers: Nick and Tom is broken down into 50 levels of colorful, action-packed strategy.

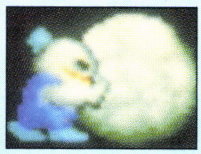
by Donn Nauert

Here's a rather simple storyline for you: Your mission, guide Nick and Tom (a/k/a the Snow Brothers) through 50 stages of mazes. Armed only with a ragged snowball, the two abominable snowmen ride off into the blizzard. If they succeed in their task, they'll be awarded the company of a lovely princess.

Snow Brothers is a two-player game that includes a buy-in feature as well as a continue. You use an eight-way joystick and two buttons, which have different functions in certain situations, to control the two heroes. The jump button not only allows you to climb to higher ledges, but you can also lift frozen enemies and place them into strategic locations (to use as steps, for example). The throw button is used to pack enemies into a snowball and/or throw them across the screen, which may take other enemies out as they go.

The game has 50 stages that are broken down as five levels of ten stages each. Each maze consists of various-sized ledges and slides that run both horizontally and vertically, occasionally posing an obstacle for the player(s).

Nick and Tom will face a variety of enemies in their quest to reach their sweethearts. There are four villains (all characters, except Nick and Tom, were nameless at press time) that you will encounter through much of the game: a green skinned creature that spits out fireballs, a caveman that can throw icicles and change into a swirling tornado while chasing Nick and Tom across the screen; and brown- and red-horned devils that can knock our two heroes down by doing either a barrel roll or putting their heads down and flying at the unsuspecting good guy.







Also, what can best be described as a yellow monkey along with a sumo wrestler are a few of the new enemies introduced in the higher stages. The yellow monkey will run back and forth then suddenly jump to the ledge above, while the sumo wrestler is more content on the highest ledge of the round throwing fireballs down on the two snowmen. Every tenth round you'll face a huge mini-boss. These guys are big, ugly and mean. Each one has its own characteristics, but they all have one fault: They really don't like snow much.

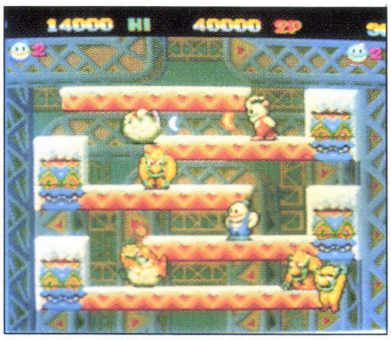
Remember to throw the snow-packed enemy at other villains. This is the only way you will be able to obtain special advantage items and bonus points (or sushi). Advantage items are differently colored jars that help give you extra speed or long-range shot, but the green jar is the big prize—it will give you temporary invincibility. If you happen to see the jar, get it quickly and you'll fly high above the enemies. Every time you fly over a creature, you'll knock him off the screen and receive 8,000 points in the bargain.

It's hard not to get the feeling that this is a Japanese-designed game by the names given to the bonus items. With names like Seaweed Roll, Fatty Tuna and Sea Urchin, its just natural to assume that *Snow Brothers* isn't a





Snow Brothers is filled with lots of animated creatures set on your destruction.



To get rid of an enemy, you must first pack it into a snowball then sling it across the screen.

domestic invention. While playing, I came across two bonus items not mentioned in the text. The first one was a small picture of a Snow Brother surrounded by a multi-colored circle. When I grabbed the icon, six smiling grapes fell from the sky. Each grape I packed in snow gave me a letter. If you spell the word "SNOW," you get an extra man. The second bonus I found occurred when I used one snowball to wipe out all the enemies on the round. Six pieces of paper with the Japanese symbol for 10,000 on them floated down to the floor. If you're ready to grab them, it's an easy way to claim a quick 60,000 extra points. I also noticed that it is possible to eliminate all the enemies on any round using one or two snowballs; it's just a matter of working the enemies into the correct pattern.

Graphically *Snow Brothers* is superb. It has sharp, bright colors that are very pleasing to look at through all 50 rounds. This is one game that not only has an exciting background to look at but a great foreground as well. And I can't say enough about the animation. The way the enemies shake off the snow as they thaw is incredible. The cavemen slowly build up to a violent whirlwind, then grind to a halt. And for you Mr. Bill fans, every time one of the Snow Brothers gets hit or becomes invincible, they get an "Oh Nooo" expression on their face. All of these seem to overshadow the sound and music, which at times fall into the background when you play.

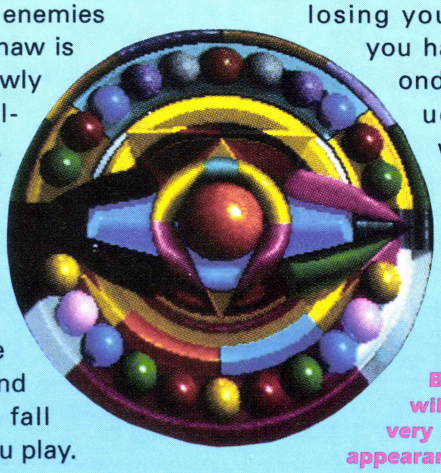
Every bit of this game reminds me of *Bubble Bobble*, another Romstar product that is the likely inspiration for *Snow Brothers*. Instead of using bubbles as a weapon, you have snow. Instead of riding a bubble up to an impossible-to-jump-from ledge, you stand on a snowball. In fact, on the last round you can get trapped in bubbles. But even after I finished the game, I found myself throwing more credits up on the screen, and I think you will too.

Ballarena

by Fisteme

As you walk up to this game, you hear these words: "I am Ballarena. How many phases can you complete. I challenge you." Your objective in this game is to see how many phases or rounds you can go through by knocking away the different-shaped figures using a paddle and ball. The ominous voice gives you the reason—now all you have to do is play.

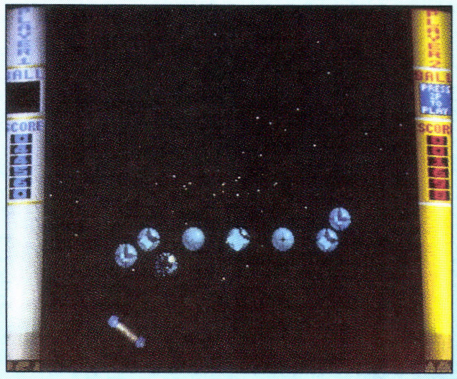
Ballarena, the first game that the French-owned Fisteme has brought to the States, is similar in theme to *Breakout* and *Arkanoid* but takes a unique approach by allowing 360-degree movement around the playfield. It sports two rotary knobs (for one or two-player simultaneous play) and a button on each side of the knob. The rotary control is used to move your paddle, called a bat, while the buttons are used to either release the ball from the bat or shoot a laser. After losing your last ball, you have ten seconds to continue from where you left off. But try not to worry—if you're in a two-player game and you don't make it before the timer runs out, you can still join in at any time.



The colorful playfields in Ballarena are wild-looking but very realistic in appearance.

Set in the vast reaches of space (you know this by all the stars whizzing past), you will encounter 99





Fisteme's Ballarena is the first foray into American arcades for this French company. The game is a strange mixture of Arkanoid and Galaga.

phases that consist of 64 different patterns. Each pattern is made up of various-sized balls, tubes and blocks. The levels can be very simple in nature, such as 20 to 30 balls scattered about the screen, or they can be complex, with tubes wrapped around blocks resulting in something that looks like a Mayan tribute to some sun god. Not included in the 99 phases are the challenge rounds, which are a chance for you to take a breather and add to your overall point total. In the challenge round, you simply shoot all the monsters as they appear (much like the challenge rounds in *Galaga*). Your points are determined by the number of shots and the number of hits.

There are two things that make this game different from other games of this type. First, you can play a two-

continued on page 120

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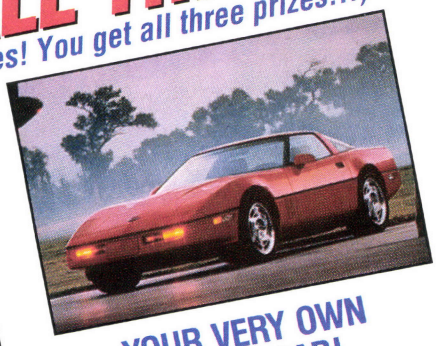
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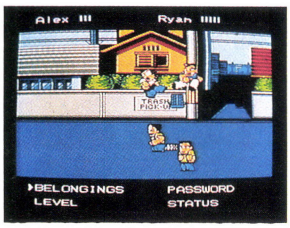
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CIRCLE #138 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



ELECTRONIC GAMING FANDOM LIVES!

BY ARNIE KATZ

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This month he reaps the harvest sown in an earlier column, in which he introduced electronic-gaming fandom.

I feel like a cross between Leonardo da Vinci and Dr. Frankenstein. In the February 1990 issue of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, I outlined the concept of electronic-gaming fandom. I described the rewards of participation as well as the benefits to the electronic-gaming world. I described fanzines, which are amateur publications edited by and for fans of video, computer and coin-op games, and I encouraged fans to produce their own gaming gazettes.

In this case, a little encouragement was all it took. Apparently, the idea of publishing your own small newsletter with personal opinions about games and gaming sounded as intriguing to many readers as it does to me. The first electronic-gaming fanzines recently began filling my mailbox. They are mostly small, and even the most enthusiastic game fan can see room for improvement. But these precious publications are truly a breath of fresh air. Gamers are reaching out and speaking up about their hobby, and the results are absolutely fascinating.

Let's look at this month's field of fanzines:

Turbo-Pro #1

1365 Windsong Rd., Orlando, FL 32809
12 issues/$3
Six pages

An in-depth review/strategy piece on *Legendary Axe* is the highlight of this self-proclaimed first issue. The modest editor—he/she forgot to credit his/her self anywhere on this charming NEC newsletter—covers the game with great enthusiasm and offers a handy tip for gaining additional lives.

The short, though well-conceived, editorial discusses the current struggle for the 16-bit market. He rightly concedes current leadership to Sega, but makes some valid points about NEC's potential to close the gap.

Turbo-Pro commits the usual mistakes of inexperience associated with premiere issues, but it's a lively and promising publication. The editor writes well, is willing to state opinions and yet is ready to throw open the magazine to comments and reviews by readers.

cyberDrome #1

8840-R Via Mallorca, La Jolla, CA 92037
Monthly. One issue/$1; Ten issues/$10
Eight pages. Editor: Edward Karpp

Just about every fanzine has something of interest in it, but it is inevitable that the cream will rise to the top. Ed Karpp's beautifully printed and designed *cyberDrome* moves to the head of the personally published pack with its first issue. Well-written essays and reviews cover all cartridge-based home systems, and the editor plans to consider coin-ops in future issues.

Karpp's editorial introduces the publication and tackles the tough question of whether an interest as widespread as electronic gaming needs a fandom to focus attention upon it. "Amateurs like us will publish fanzines that we can trade with other fanzines," writes Ed. "The network perpetuates itself, growing stronger. Opinions will be shared; people will meet and talk. The bottom line is that communication has the potential to shape what is now a large but amorphous body of fandom."

Most of the issue is devoted to reviews of recent video games, each accompanied by detailed numerical ratings. In soliciting reviews from readers, Karpp stresses the need to take a stand about the game being reviewed, and he definitely follows his own rule. You won't always agree with his judgments, but Karpp generally explains his point of view in a logical, calm way that is bound to promote discussion in the letter columns of future issues.

Not that the editor of *cyberDrome* is taking any chance in that area. He also challenges the readers to air their thoughts on the subject of the tug-of-war between Nintendo and the "outlaw" third-party publishers. If that doesn't heat the next letter column to a bright cherry red, nothing will!

If you're looking for a niche in fandom, sending Ed Karpp a buck for a sample copy of *cyberDrome* is probably the best place to start. Real video-game lovers are sure to enjoy this intelligent fanzine.

Video Wars #1

684 Kensington Way, Bolingbrook, IL 60439
One issue/50¢
Three pages. Editor: Mike Ciletti

The most provocative article in this meaty, little fanzine is "Video Gaming

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NEC

in the '90s." Mike's seven predictions won't win him many friends at Nintendo headquarters, but the idea of Sony becoming a major factor in the market by the end of the decade isn't quite as farfetched as some may think.

Rounding out *Video Wars #1* are a news section, reviews of *Tecmo Bowl* (for the NES) and *Altered Beast* (for Sega) and some on-target hints for several popular cartridges. I'd be interested in reading somewhat longer reviews by Mike in future issues, so that he can examine the games in more detail than he did this time around.

Mike has come up with a tempting offer that will, hopefully, entice folks to checkout his fanzine. You can get a sample by sending him a self-addressed stamped envelope and just 20¢. Now that's my idea of a bargain!

The Altered Beat Vol. 1 No. 1.

2211 Lakeshore Drive, St. Joseph, MI 49085
One issue/$1
Four pages. Editor: Edward Finkler

This good-humored journal is exclusively devoted to coverage of the Sega Genesis. Its 14-year-old editor really knows his stuff too, and *The Altered Beat* may soon develop into a real focal point for hard-core fans of the 16-bit video-game machine.

Genesis owners will appreciate Ed's extensive report on forthcoming games for the system. He covers not only cartridges from Sega of America, but also developments under way in Japan.

The editor's review of *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* for the Genesis is another major plus. It thoroughly dissects the cartridge, offering comments on its bad as well as good points. It's also quite well-written, which bodes well for the future of this fanzine.

(Special Note: We received some interesting material from Dan MacInnes, editor of *Regula,* another new fanzine. The problem is, he forgot to include his address! Indeed, that's the first lesson for fanzine editors.)

Try a Fanzine

The editors whose first efforts I've just reviewed have already discovered the joys of hobby publishing, but there can never be too many electronic-gaming fanzines. The reason: No matter what other newsletters may offer, the one thing they can't possibly have is *your* unique opinions and personality.

Fanzines are a great communications medium. Fandom offers the opportunity to share thoughts on games and gaming with other knowledgeable fans like yourself. The cost is little more than postage, and even some of that can be recouped with a small subscription fee for those who don't have fanzines of their own to barter with.

An interesting point about the first batch of gaming fanzines: All focus on video games. Computer gamers glory in the intellectual depth of their favorite disks, yet it seems that video gamers have taken the lead in creativity and initiative. Consider this a challenge to the computer-game fans to get involved in this crazy fanzine stuff.

Wanted: Readers

Editors of electronic-gaming fanzines want you. If you'd like to see some enthusiastic discussion of games and gaming, check out the fanzines described in this column. These small-press publications are a pure expression of America's independent spirit; they provide a forum for the expression of thoughts and opinions. They also offer readers the chance to participate through letters of comment or even contributions. You won't likely earn any money, but hey, this is a *hobby.* We talk about games because we love them, right?

In an effort to help new fanzines find an audience, I am going to compile a mailing list of interested readers that I will provide to any prospective fanzine editor who sends me a **self-addressed stamped envelope**: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. Just request the "Fanzine Reader List," and it's yours.

By the same token, let's hear from folks who would like to have their names circulated among the fanzine editors. You'll get a chance to sample these publications and decide which to support. Just send your name and address to me (at the above address), and ask to be put on the Fanzine Reader List. In a couple of months, the fanzine flood will be unleashed.



Illustration by Michio Tsuzuki

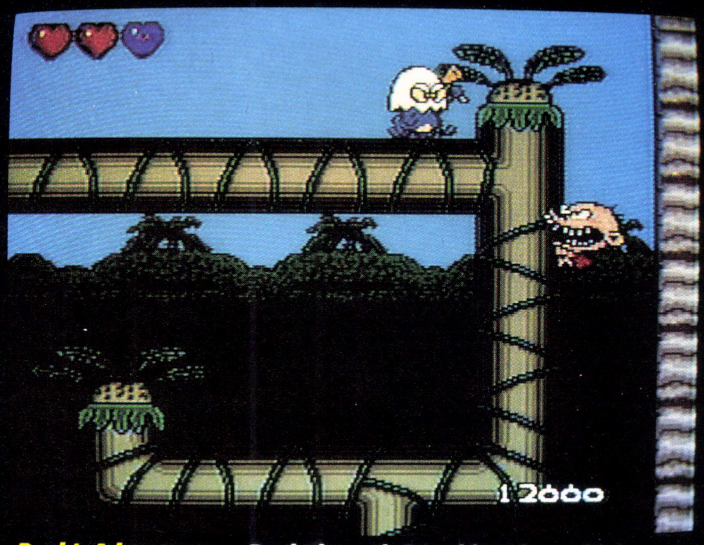
What's Next?

Future issues of VG&CE will review fanzines and carry news of the emerging electronic-gaming fandom. So if you've got fanzines or questions about fandom, send them to me in care of the magazine, and I'll try to do them justice in these pages.

Brings you Bonk's Adventure,™ Final Lap Twin,™ Cybercore,™ . . .



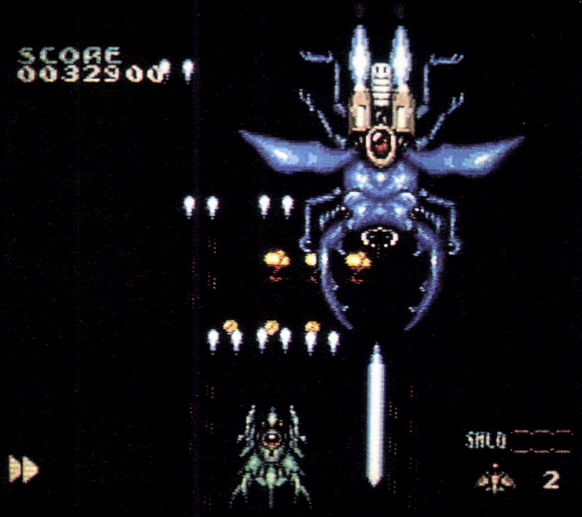
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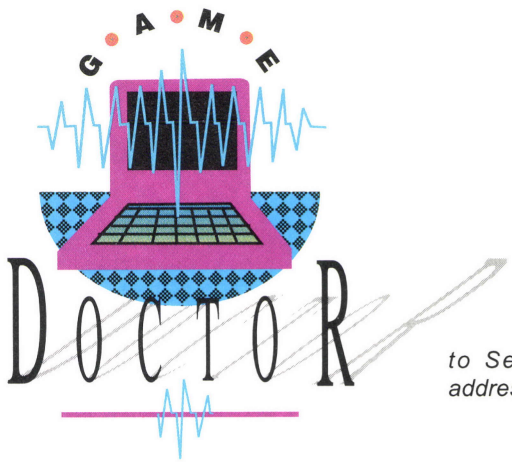


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The Man With the Answers Reveals All!

by The Game Doctor

Hello again, game fans. With this issue, the Doc will answer those questions about video games that have been piling up around here over the past few months. We've also got a Game Doctor Prize Packet to award and lots of other information, so let's dig in.

First off, I have a letter here from Roderick White of Daytona, Florida, that gives the lowdown on the NEC vs. Genesis technical specifications. Take it away, Roderick!

question

This is in response to a letter in the March 1990 issue of VG&CE written by Noel Affonso. The writer stated it was strange that the Sega Genesis is a 16-bit system and has only the same amount of power as the 8-bit NEC TurboGrafx-16. In response to this letter, you neglected to mention several important facts, which are listed below:

1. Resolution:
   Sega Genesis (320 x 224 pixels)
   TurboGrafx-16 (256 x 216 pixels)
2. Sprites on-screen:
   Genesis (80)
   TurboGrafx-16 (64)
3. Sprites per horizontal line:
   Genesis (20)
   TurboGrafx-16 (16)
4. Program RAM:
   Genesis (64K)
   TurboGrafx-16 (8K)
5. The Genesis can move different levels of backgrounds at different speeds to simulate 3-D. The Genesis also possesses the capability to scale and zoom sprites. Both of those functions are not possible on the TurboGrafx-16.

While both systems are excellent and have great games, on a purely technical level, I think it is clear that the Genesis is far superior.

In 1985, Sega released the Sega Mark III system in Japan. A year later, the system was released in the U.S. under the name "Master System."

—Roderick White
Daytona Beach, Florida

answer

Thanks a lot, Roderick; the information speaks for itself. The NEC vs. Genesis question is elaborated on by the next writer.

question

I've noticed that the maximum megabyte (Meg) rating on an SMS cartridge is "4 Meg," which equals 512 kilobytes. Is 512KB the maximum amount of memory the SMS can address on a cartridge?

The highest Meg rating on a Genesis cartridge I've seen is 6 Meg or 768KB. Is this the maximum for the Genesis?

PS: I wrote to NEC and asked about the curious TurboGrafx-16 that only has an 8-bit CPU. NEC told me its system uses two 8-bit processors. According to NEC, the TG-16 [can handle] 1.5 MIPS (millions of instructions per second) whereas the Sega Genesis [can handle] only .70 MIPS.

—Royce Liao
Fullerton, California

answer

Thank you, Royce. Now how about I actually answer a question, okay guys?

Yes, 4 Meg is the maximum addressable memory for the SMS, but according to Sega, the Genesis can actually address 8 Meg or 1000KB.

question

I just bought a Sega Genesis after selling my Master System to a friend, thinking that the converter would work with all games. At Christmas I received the Power Base Converter. When I read the instructions it said that *F-16 Fighting Falcon* cannot be used, and some games need the old control pads from the SMS to play [them]. My questions are : why is that, and where can I get the old control pads?

—Alex Georgopoulos
Pine Brook, New Jersey

answer

While most SMS games can be played through the standard Genesis controller, some basic infelicities exist between the two types of Sega controllers. Some of the older games rely upon elements that do not exist in the new controllers, so the old ones are required.

The standard SMS controllers can be purchased through Sega of America but should soon be available through normal retail outlets.

question

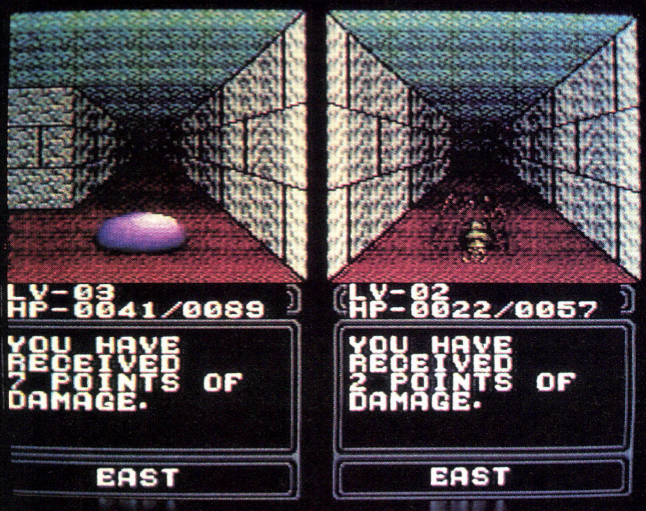
I am considering buying a 16-bit game system and would like to know if there will ever be a system more powerful than the 16-bit console.

—Troy Atwood
Fayetteville, North Carolina

answer

You can never say "never" in the world of electronic entertainment, Troy, but right now I'd admit that video games have reached at least a temporary watershed with the 16-bit CPU. It is possible, perhaps even likely, according to some industry experts, that NEC will be upgrading the TurboGrafx-16 to full 16-bit CPU capability, but I doubt we'll see a

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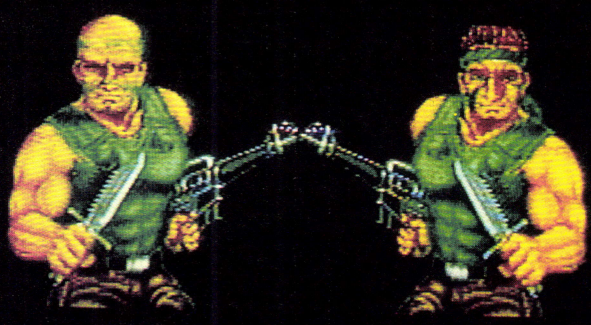
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future jump—to a 32-bit processor, for example—any time in the next few years.

Sega, at least, vehemently denies it is even considering the possibility of jumping to a 32-bit CPU-based system. "The technology has reached the point," explained one of Sega's technical-support people, "where we've run up against the limitations of the TV set in terms of the image it is capable of producing. The Sega spokesman hinted that HDTV (high-definition TV) may represent the next major leap forward in video-game technology.

The Doc agrees, by the way. If anything, the addition of a CD drive for existing video-game systems seems the next logical step in the evolution of video games. And, since Nintendo has yet to even announce a release date for the U.S. version of its 16-bit Super Famicom, I'd say that 16-bit technology has barely arrived. So, while there are no guarantees that there won't be a superior technology at some point in the future, I'd say you'll be missing out on a lot of great gaming if you decide to wait.



Is Sega coming out with a CD-ROM player for the Genesis (like the TurboGrafx-16)?

—Steve Che
Los Angeles, California



Sega has no current plans to produce a CD-based drive for its Genesis. I think the key word there, however, is "current." If CD technology takes off this year—with NEC, Commodore Amiga, Tandy and Magnavox, among others, preparing to jump on the CD bandwagon—I believe those plans could change.

VECTREXANIA: Fans of the Vectrex—as well as the Coleco ADAM computer—have a friend in Norman Castro of 809 W. 33rd Ave., Bellevue, NE 68005 (local Omaha ADAM and Vectrex fans can contact Norman between 5 and 9 PM at (402) 291-4405. Norman runs the Omaha ADAM Users Club and publishes his own fanzine, and he tells us that as of June 30, 1988, Milton Bradley/GCE ([413] 525-6411) repairs its Vectrex units on a flat-fee basis. Console repairs cost $40 and joysticks are repaired/replaced for $15. Norman has also located a source of new Vectrex units! Pleasant Valley Video, 8141 Pleasant Valley Rd., Camden, OH 45311; (513) 787-4707, has the treasured system. Tell them Norman and Game Doc sent ya!

NOT ANOTHER ONE! Department: Just when my year-long quest to locate the fabled Vectrex source seems to be at an end, another even more insurmountable challenge is laid in my lap!

Doug Downs (P.O. Box 47, Greentown, OH 44630) writes that he is desperately seeking games and new controllers for the venerable Bally Home Arcade, a/k/a Bally Professional Arcade, Astrocade, etc. If anyone out there can help Doug, write him directly, and drop me a note. I'll print any info I receive on this subject—the Bally was a wonderful game system!

Game Packet Winner Department: The winner of this month's Game Doctor Prize Packet of neat game-related trinkets is Paul J. Kowalski from my home town of Brooklyn, New York. We don't have room to run Paul's entire missive, but here are some of the highlights:



Since the days when Nolan Bushnell created *Pong,* I have always been fascinated by video games. I was also the first of my friends to own an Atari 2600. I still have this "prized" machine along with 70-plus carts for it. I rarely take it out and use it, but primitive as it was, there were some programmers (e.g., Activision) who could make this 4K system perform some amazing feats.

I almost got Colecovision, but the "fall" came and the video-game world deep-sixed itself. Too many bad games at too high a price.

Nintendo tested the waters again after a few years and became an instant success. Sega followed, and I bought my son one. Even though Nintendo had a multitude of games, my son and I considered the SMS a superior piece of hardware and preferred their limited catalog of wares to those of NES. We have since purchased Sega's Genesis system. This 16-bit dream machine is a joy to play and use. The newly constructed pad controller is not awkward to handle, and the extra buttons add to game play.

Since the NES and SMS both use the 6502 CPU, I always wondered why the Atari and Commodore 8-bit computers never had such high-quality graphics. Now the Genesis uses the Motorola 68000 CPU chip, just like the ST and Amiga. The clarity, speed and stereo sound really add to the enjoyment of game play. The graphics displayed on an ordinary TV set far outweigh those displayed on most specialized monitors.

With 32-bit technology getting cheaper and cheaper, I'm sure that we will see another chapter in the history of video gaming. I just hope that another fallout doesn't occur. Sega may be slow in coming out with new games, but Nintendo is saturating the market, and like times past, the selling threshold wears out, the public gets fed up and companies die out, leaving their stock to odd lot sellers charging 50¢ a game. It happened to Atari, Coleco and others.

Atari ruled for years and look what happened. Nintendo rules now, and it can happen again.

—Paul J. Kowalski
Brooklyn, New York



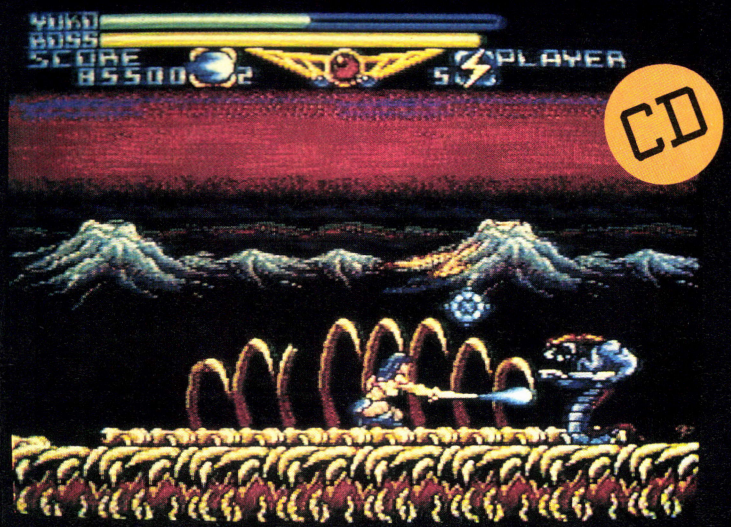
Just as the SMS was able to produce superior graphics to computers using the same CPU, the Genesis pretty much blows away the comparable ST and Amiga games I've seen, strictly in terms of graphics. The fact is, "dedicated" systems always seem to produce better images, if only because so much of the computer's power is channeled in that direction.

In any case, Paul, your Game Packet is in the mail!

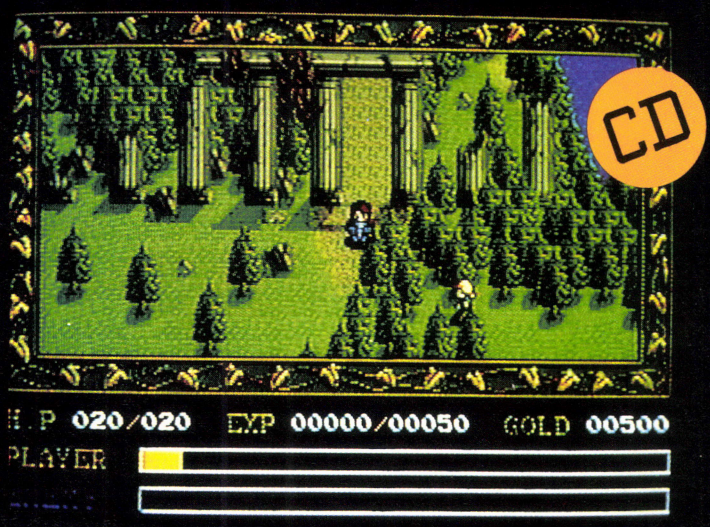
Q & A QUICKIES— Kevin Briedenbach of Hustisford, Wisconsin, wonders what the difference is between the Sega Base System and the Sega Master System. The answer: The Base System is just the game console and one starter cartridge while the SMS package includes the Light Phaser and a target game that uses the gun.... Lots of curiosity about third-party software for the Genesis and SMS from folks like Jeff Kowerchuk of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Actually, third-party software has already appeared for the Genesis. *Zoom,* for example, was produced by its computer publisher, Discovery—it has simply appeared under Sega's label. Several independent publishers, including Spectrum Holobyte, have already inked deals with Sega to produce Genesis software. Whether those games will be published independently or through Sega is still up in the air.

And that's about it for this installment of *Game Doctor.* Remember to send your questions and comments to GAME DOCTOR, c/o 330 S. DECATUR, SUITE 152, LAS VEGAS, NV 89107. As for me, I'm on my way to the Jacuzzi with the Game Nurse. Later, gang!

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The Legendary Axe
Keith Courage in Alpha Zones
Bonk's Adventure

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Alien Crush
Pac-Land
Cratermaze
JJ and Jeff

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AROUND THE BASES

A Survey of Electronic Baseball

by Bill Kunkel & Arnie Katz

The snow pack melts on mountain tops, creeks run with water, life reawakens and a young man's fancy turns to Astroturf and domed stadia. Ah, but that was in the old days, when pre-strike hardball was merely a seasonal phenomenon with a beginning and an end.

These days, baseball goes on forever. As soon as the police and attack dogs take the field after the final out of the World Series, writers, analysts and all-purpose bean counters start poring over a season of collected data. Their labors are in preparation for feeding reams of numbers into the insatiable maw of stat books, team analysis, magazines and statistical-replay games.

Where once the arrival of those first chill October winds meant the end of baseball, it now signals the start of the "Simulation Season." Armed with a season's worth of ERAs and RBIs, the fantasy baseball manager sets out on a quest to reshape reality, to create a better team through his own acumen and insight.

Forget about Astroturf and baseball cards for the time being, and let's look exclusively at the many ways in which baseball has been reproduced in a variety of electronic mediums.

The Early Days

Back in the early days of programmable video gaming, baseball games were a staple of everyone's game library. The Atari 2600 featured Bob Whitehead's *Home Run,* basically a glorified version of stickball; the Bally Home Arcade and Magnavox Odyssey^2 both had top-down versions of the national pastime; and Mattel caused a sensation with its sophisticated, two-player-only *Major League Baseball.*

The early games were arcade-style contests in which the players were nondescript ciphers whose skills were provided exclusively by the human player's hand-eye coordination. With publication of Scott Orr's *Championship Star League Baseball* (Gamestar), strategy entered the picture; players garnered ratings distinguishing between sluggers and scratch hitters, and the game also introduced the idea of relief pitching.

Since then, the vast majority of electronic baseball games have fallen into one of three categories: action-strategy, stat replay and hybrids that feature elements of both.

Thinking Man's Action

In the computer universe, the leading proponent of action-strategy baseball was Bob Whitehead's *Hardball* (Accolade). *Hardball* utilizes a behind-the-plate perspective for pitching and hitting, then switches to an alternative camera angle after the ball is hit. All players come with statistics and ratings, and substitutions can be made freely throughout the game.

After approximately three years in the top spot, *Hardball* was replaced earlier this year by *Hardball II* (Accolade), a souped-up version of the original authored by Distinctive Software Inc. (creators of the popular *Test Drive* series). The new version of this venerable classic makes many of its improvements behind-the-scenes: stats are stored and updated; infielders and outfielders can be shifted; and the entire managing process has been simplified through the implementation of pull-down menus. More obvious upgrades include additional ballparks—seven altogether—with different visual presentations and related stadium effects, an instant-replay feature and overall enhanced graphics courtesy of an expanded number of frame animations.

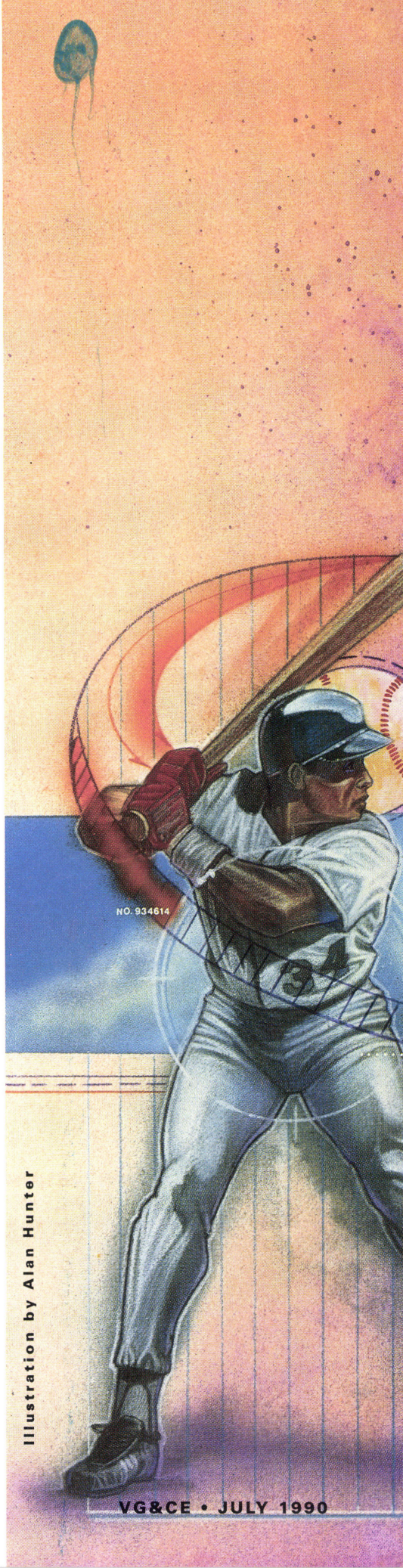


Illustration by Alan Hunter

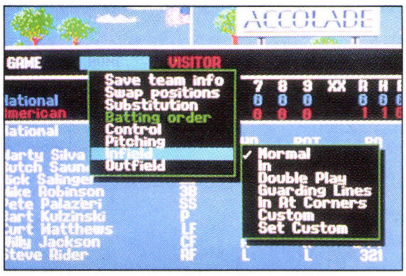


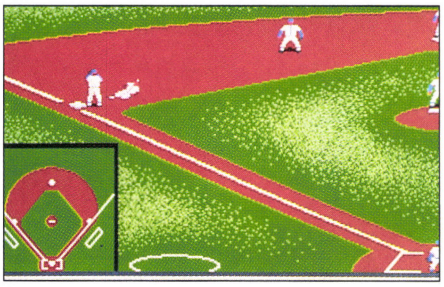
Other recent action-strategy games that showed promise as sure-shot licenses upon release—*Pete Rose Pennant Fever* (Gamestar) and *Sporting News Baseball* (Epyx)—faded from view over the past year. *Pete Rose Pennant Fever* suffered from its association with Charlie Hustle, whose fondness for gambling lead to a major scandal shortly after Gamestar released this ill-fated program. *Sporting News Baseball* was doomed by Epyx's internal difficulties. The main selling features of *PRPF* were its multiple-camera presentation, the use of real major league players and a solid statistical foundation. *SNB* also uses real players, a league mode and a plethora of statistics. Unfortunately, many of the stats seem of dubious value in simulating performance. (An RBI, for example, is a pretty useless statistic in terms of stat simulation, since it depends on factors beyond the control of the batter, like base runners.)

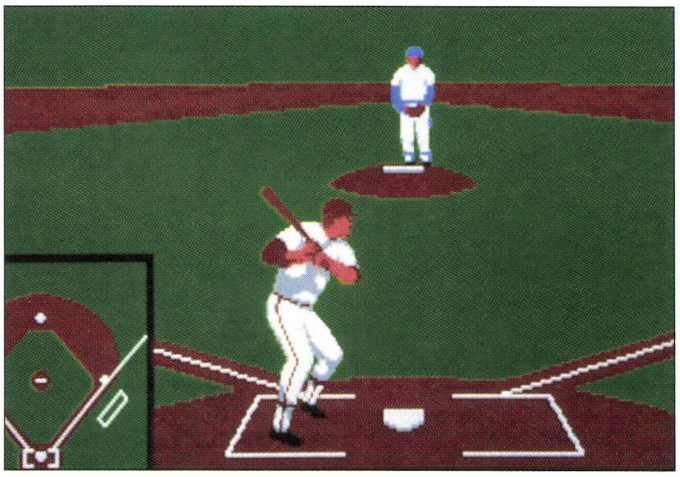
The Heavy-Hitting Hybrids

Two of the hottest contemporary baseball games are hybrids, similar to

World's Greatest Baseball Game (Epyx). *WGBG* was originally designed as a stat-based simulation, but pressure from Epyx forced the designers (Quest, Inc.) to add an arcade mode. Unfortunately, the C-64 simply was not capable of running two such ambitious games in one program, and the results were unsatisfactory from both a stat and action point of view.







Accolade has brought its computerized diamond success, *Hardball*, up to date with its *Hardball II* sequel.

Nonetheless, the concept behind *WGBG* was obviously solid; it was just the technology that wasn't up to the challenge. By the time Eddie Dombrower created *Earl Weaver Baseball,* with extensive input by the Earl of Baltimore himself, computers like the Amiga and IBM made possible a far more successful execution. *Earl Weaver* can be played in any of several modes against either the computer or another human player. It works as a stat game, an action game or a stat-influenced action contest.

An upgraded version of the original, *Earl Weaver Baseball 1.5*, has since been published, and an auxiliary disk containing every major league stadium, the *Player Stats 1989 Season*, is also available.

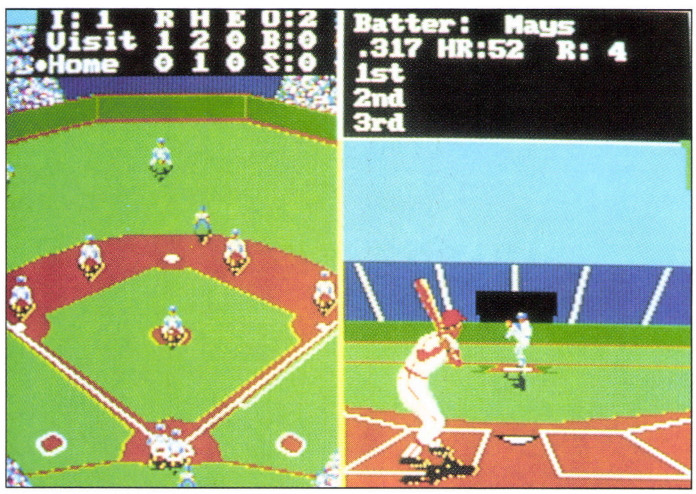
The new kid on the block is *TV Sports: Baseball* (Cinemaware), from Don Daglow's Beyond Software. (Daglow was the producer on *Earl Weaver.*) This is very similar to *EWB*, but with many of the rough edges smoothed. As of press time, it had yet to be released.

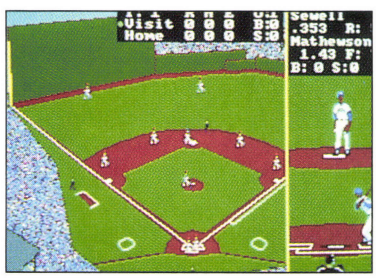
Casey at the Stats

Stat-based games are an entirely different proposition from action-strategy contests. The object here is *not* to employ one's joystick skill to manipulate on-the-field players. In these games, the user is the team manager. As such, the user cannot go out and throw the ball or swing the bat for his players; he can only assemble the best lineup, provide the most intelligent strategy and hope the team performs.

For years, stat games eschewed graphics in order to produce the highest possible level of statistical accuracy. Games like *Computer Baseball* (SSI), *Statis Pro Major League Baseball* (Avalon Hill) and *APBA Major League Player's Baseball* (Random House) offered, at most, an overview of a diamond with player names inserted at the appropriate position.

The game that made the breakthrough was Barry Morstain's *MicroLeague Baseball* (MicroLeague Sports Association). Published in 1984, *MicroLeague* was the first simulation to offer fully animated graphics. Suddenly users could actually *see* the plays being executed, rather than simply reading a one-line description. As a result, *MLB* became an institution, a single game that brought home the bacon for an entire company over several years (MLSA added *MicroLeague WWF Wrestling* two years ago), thanks to its various extra disks and peripheral products.





EA has upgraded their successful stat/action game and renamed it *Earl Weaver Baseball 1.5.*

MicroLeague Baseball II (MLSA), designed by Morstain and Subway Software, has since appeared for the Atari ST, IBM and Macintosh. *MLB II* adds several features including enhanced graphics, stadium effects (such as grass or artificial turf options), a bull pen coach to report whether relievers are warm, injury listing and more sophisticated player ratings.

Championship MicroLeague Baseball (MLSA), by PS Consulting (Ed Daniels, creator of *Pure-Stat Baseball*) and Subway Software, is the latest incarnation of the venerable classic. Scheduled for release later this year on the C-64, *CMLB* features a depth of simulation that should impress even veteran stat fans. In addition to the new game's sophisticated statistical base, it also features all-new graphics that include stadiums from a variety of eras (everything from Minnesota's Homerdome to the Polo Grounds) and beautifully detailed animations including pitchers delivering from a full windup or, if there are men on base, the stretch.

With Ed Daniels' recent signing by MLSA, *MicroLeague* absorbed its only real competition over the past decade. Originally with Quest, Inc. (creators of *World's Greatest Baseball Game*), Daniels later formed Software Simulations and published *Pure-Stat Baseball*, the only other stat simulation offering full graphics and animation.

This is not to say that none of the

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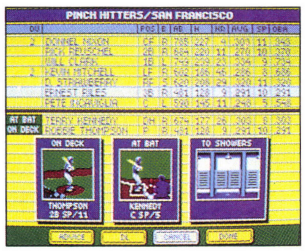


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Cinemaware's *TV Sports: Baseball* is a new entry in the *TV Sports* series of computer games (Amiga version at left; IBM version shown below).

nonanimated programs have survived. Lance Haffner's *Full Count Baseball* is one of several non-graphic programs that maintains a solid cult following and issues season disks on a regular basis. In fact, a new entry into the text-based baseball sweepstakes appeared in 1989: *Major League Manager* (UXB/Spinnaker), a solid, though unspectacular, simulation that offers wannabe managers all the standard strategic options.

Baseball Video Games

Once upon a time, the term "baseball video game" was synonymous with strictly arcade-type action. No longer: Modern dedicated game systems boast some of the hottest hardball simulations around.

The NES market fairly bursts with solid action-strategy games, like the visually and statistically solid *Baseball Stars* (SNK), *Interactive Major League Baseball* (LJN) and *RBI Baseball* (Tengen), the only video-game entry with real major league player stats. And then there's Culture Brain's downright bizarre *Baseball Simulator 1.000*, which goes considerably further. *BS 1.000* offers fans three leagues worth of players, two of which are fairly ordinary. The third, however, the "Ultra League" contains players possessing super powers!

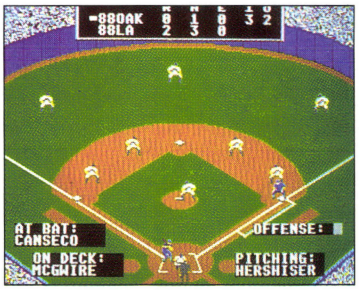
For fans who prefer their baseball presented in somewhat more conventional terms, there's *Reggie Jackson Baseball* for the Sega Master System. Reggie Jackson is strongly modeled on *Tommy Lasorda Baseball*, a smash on the Sega Genesis. Both games feature stat-based action with several league's worth of teams comprised of fantasy players.

The graphics on both games are astonishing, representing state of the art in their respective 8- and 16-bit formats. Both games combine behind-the-plate and top-down perspectives to produce games so realistic that a quick look, especially on *Tommy Lasorda,* might fool the unwary observer into thinking they were actually viewing a real baseball game.

TurboGrafx-16 fans have a similarly impressive baseball contest available in the form of *World Class Baseball* (NEC). Once again, behind-the-plate and top-down viewpoints are used to produce a top flight simulation of the national pastime.

Back to the Future

Despite the avalanche of baseball products, baseball is likely to remain a hot ticket in the electronic-entertainment universe. At least two major new releases—*Championship MicroLeague*, a newcomer in stat replay from MLSA, and an action-strategy simulation from Scott Orr's Season Ticket label on Data East—are scheduled to appear on store shelves in 1990, along with the usual collection of season, stadium and other sec-



***MicroLeague Baseball II* further enhances its namesake.**

ondary disks for existing products.

Diamonds, they say, are forever. Apparently, this also holds true for baseball diamonds, especially those of the electronic persuasion.

The Baseballography

As with any listing that boasts of completeness, the "baseballography" is doomed to failure. So many baseball games have appeared over the years that one or two will almost certainly slip through the cracks. Nonetheless, to the best of the authors' knowledge, the following listing is complete. We welcome any additions.

VIDEO GAMES

Home Run (Atari for the Atari 2600)

Earliest 2600 baseball game, designed by Bob Whitehead. Very primitive. Three-man defensive teams engaged in a game resembling stickball more than baseball.

Tornado Baseball (Bally for the Bally Home Arcade)

Early arcade-oriented baseball game similar to the old coin-op in which a ball bearing appeared from a slot on the pitcher's mound and players pressed a button to swing a tiny, spring-driven bat.

Baseball (Magnavox for the Odyssey^2)

Only baseball game ever created for the Odyssey system. Pretty good for its time.

Major League Baseball (Mattel for the Intellivision)

Groundbreaking Intellivision program that lacked only a solitaire mode. Extremely realistic graphics.

Major League All Star Baseball (Mattel for the Intellivision)

Similar to ***Major League Baseball***, with improved graphics and a one-player mode.

Realsports Baseball (Atari for the Atari 2600)

Improved version of the national pastime for the 2600 featured full-team play.

Super Challenge Baseball (Mattel/M-Network for the Atari 2600)

Similar to ***RealSports Baseball***, this program was produced by Mattel's M-Network, which served as a third-party software supplier for the 2600. Used a slightly angled top-down perspective.

Super Action Baseball (Coleco for the ColecoVision)

Sophisticated baseball simulation that broke ground with multiple camera angles and generally hot graphics. ***Super Action Baseball*** required special controllers, which made it awkward to play and hurt its sales.

Major League Baseball (Nintendo for the NES)

Nintendo's own baseball game for its NES misses the target. Very primitive, ***MLB*** has long since been surpassed.

Bases Loaded (Jaleco for the NES)

This superior NES baseball game introduced the concept of player statistics and superior graphics to NES hardball simulations.

RBI Baseball (Tengen for the NES)

Action-strategy contest is one of the best NES baseball games, though its graphics have long since been surpassed. ***RBI*** is the only baseball video game to use real major league players.

Major League Baseball (LJN for the NES) This rookie is the subject of a lawsuit because ads claimed the game contains major league rosters although real player names are not included. Action-strategy baseball game with nice graphics.

Great Baseball (Sega for the SMS)

Sega's own baseball game for its SMS. Poor animations and game play.

Pretty vacant.

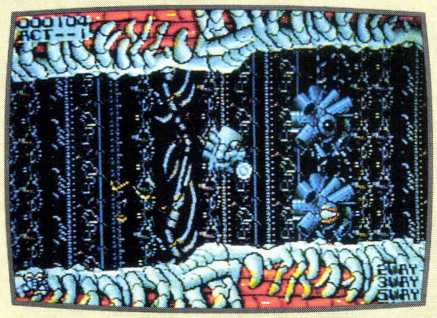
Reggie Jackson Baseball (Sega for the SMS)

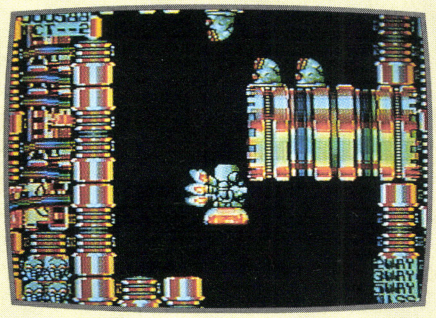
Excellent SMS baseball game modeled on the amazing Genesis game, ***Tommy Lasorda Baseball***, which was released later.

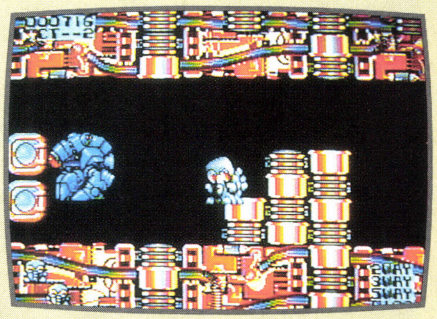
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Tommy Lasorda Baseball (Sega for the Genesis)

The finest available action-strategy baseball game on any system. Great graphics and sound (including incredible digitized speech), multiple viewpoints and strategic options make it an instant classic. Does not use real players.

Baseball Stars (SNK for the NES)

Most sophisticated of the NES baseball programs, it even allows trading! Heavy strategic component and *extremely* hot graphics. League and one-on-one play modes. The basic graphic presentation is an elevated, behind-the-plate view with scrolling to relevant portions of the field as the play develops.

Baseball Simulator 1.000 (Culture Brain for the NES)

Definitely the *weirdest* of the NES baseball games. It has plenty of unusual options (game results are saved, for example, and there are six different stadia to play in). The most striking peculiarity is that players in one of the three available leagues—the aptly named "Ultra" League—have *superpowers*! Balls explode, freeze in mid-air, burst into flames and perform other mutant apparitions guaranteed to make hardball purists burst into flames. Average graphics.

World Class Baseball (NEC for the TurboGrafx-16)

In Japan, this appeared as ***Power League Baseball*** for the PC Engine (which became the TurboGrafx-16 in America). One- or two-player game toggles between a behind-the-plate and top-down perspective. Contains digitized speech. Another baseball game for the PC Engine, ***World Stadium Baseball***, is also available in Japan but no announcement for the American market.

COMPUTER BASEBALL

Championship Star League Baseball (Gamestar)

The first computer baseball game, this classic set the mold for the modern action-strategy sports simulation. The action was presented from the grandstands along the first base line. This was the first baseball game to make relief pitching available.

World Series Baseball (Mattel)

Designed for the aborted Mattel Entertainment Computer System (ECS). Similar to ***Major League All Star Baseball*** for the Intellivision.

Championship Baseball (Gamestar)

Updated version of ***Starleague Baseball*** with enhanced graphics (including a behind-the-plate perspective).

Hardball (Accolade)

Tremendously popular action-strategy contest featuring strong graphics and multiple perspectives. The primary display is a shortstop's view of the field, with a top-down glimpse of the diamond in a corner window. It captured the essence of the batter vs. pitcher confrontation better than any previously released game had.

Hardball II (Accolade)

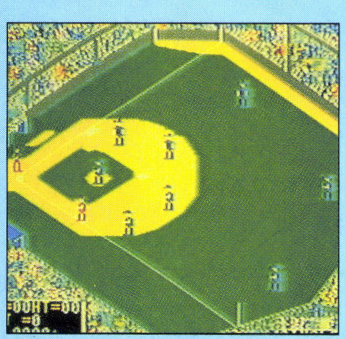
Sequel to the original by Don Mattrick's DSI, containing improved graphics and additional features.

Pete Rose Pennant Fever (Gamestar)

Multiple viewpoints were the major attraction of this ill-fated game, released just before the Rose scandal grabbed headlines. Real players with excellent use of player ratings. Pitchers are rated for speed, control and stamina; position players are rated for hitting, running, fielding and throwing.

Sporting News Baseball (Epyx)

Real players, league play and lots of statistics highlight this minor addition to the baseball library. Epyx experienced problems at the time this was released, and the game also suffered in comparison to its main competition, ***Earl Weaver Baseball***. Includes all 26 ML teams and a roster of all-time greats, with league drafts and trading of players.



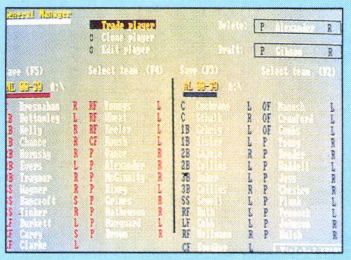
Epyx's *World's Greatest Baseball*

The World's Greatest Baseball Game (Epyx)

In attempting to produce a program that would appeal to both arcade and stat fans, ***WGBG*** wound up neither fish nor fowl. This C-64 game features an action game *and* a stat-replay mode, but both suffer from a lack of memory. The game was ahead of its time.

Slugger (Mastertronic)

There are some very nice things in this arcade-style baseball game; unfortunately, it was also designed by Brits more familiar with cricket than our strange, Colonial game. The second baseman, for example, stands *on* second base; balls don't bounce, they thud like bowling balls and once you've seen football-style cheerleaders emerge from the dugout during the 7th inning stretch to lead the crowd in pom-pom waving, well, let's just say you're not likely to forget it.



EA's *Earl Weaver Baseball 1.5*

Earl Weaver Baseball (Electronic Arts)

Spectacular graphics, real players, stat, arcade or stat-influenced arcade modes and lots of other neat features made this game a real winner. Something for everyone, but hard-core stat fans may be disappointed.

A subsequently released ***Earl Weaver 1.5*** has cleaned up some of the original's weaknesses. Electronic Arts has also done a good job of getting out new stat disks.



Cinemaware's *TV Sports: Baseball*

TV Sports: Baseball (Cinemaware)

State-of-the-art baseball simulator from Don Daglow's Beyond Software. Spectacular effort. Graphics not as flashy as *Earl Weaver's*, but they fare better over the course of a game.

Orel Hershiser's Strike Zone (Mastertronic)

Action-oriented effort features some nice graphics with an easy-to-play interface. Multiple camera angles include a behind-the-plate display for hitting/pitching, with a split-screen version for two-player games with both hitter's and pitcher's perspectives on-screen. There is also a screen showing the field from the grandstands behind home plate and along the third-base line. Based on the arcade game of the same title.

COMPUTER STAT-REPLAY

Computer Baseball (SSI)

The first stat-based baseball simulation by Dan Bunten. No graphics.

Statis Pro Major League Baseball (Avalon-Hill)

An early Avalon Hill computer game, ***Statis Pro*** is based on that company's nonelectronic board game of the same name. No graphics.

MicroLeague Baseball (MLSA)

Though somewhat deficient from a statistical point of view, ***MLB*** offers stat fans the more palatable blend of graphics and statistical content and has been the most satisfying simulation for head-to-head and league play.

MicroLeague Baseball II (MLSA)

Improved version of ***MLB*** for the ST, Mac and IBM computers. Includes injuries, a bull pen coach, stadium effects, rain outs and more complete ratings.

Championship MicroLeague Baseball (MLSA)

New version of ***MLB*** offers greatly enhanced statistics and ratings while maintaining the priority of solid graphics and a simple user-interface. A quantum leap from the original *MLB*.

Pure-Stat Baseball (Software Simulations)

Statistically superior to *MLB* but weak graphics and several bugs hurt this game in the marketplace.

APBA Major League Player's Baseball (APBA/Random House)

A combination of factors, including Random House's failure as an entertainment-software publisher, hurt this game in the marketplace. But ***APBA*** continues to survive, largely because of its license connection with the venerable ***APBA Master Game***, the best-known of the nonelectronic dice-and-cards baseball simulations. Alas, no graphics.

Radio Baseball (Electronic Arts)

Short-lived, no-graphics stat simulation that offered, instead, detailed play-by-play.

Full Count Baseball (Lance Haffner)

Solid stat contest from lone wolf sports simulation maven Haffner. Lack of graphics hurts.

Strat-O-Matic Baseball (Strat-O-Matic)

Must be played in conjunction with Strat-O-Matic player cards: so it's a hybrid computer/board game simulation.

Major League Manager (UBX)

Similar to ***APBA*** and ***Full Count Baseball***, this text-only simulation is strictly bush-league.

Pro Baseball Manager (Avalon-Hill)

This is basically an updated version of ***Statis Pro Baseball*** for the IBM. Still no graphics.

—B.K.

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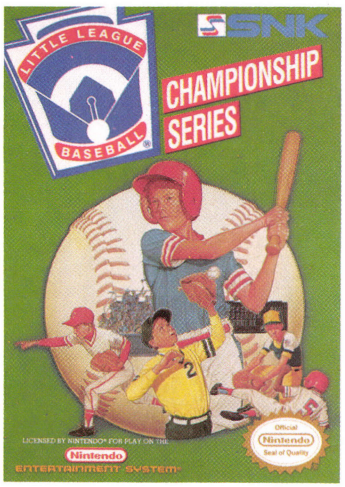
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Crystalis

WHEN the Great War brought civilization as we know it to an end, it ushered in a new era of sorcery and magic. The magicians used their magic to keep peace for a hundred years . . . Until an evil magician named Draygon began to use his powers for conquest.



To combat Draygon, the other magicians constructed four swords of wind, fire, water, and thunder. Used together, they would transform into the mightiest weapon ever created: Crystalis. But Draygon seized the weapons and scattered them far and wide.

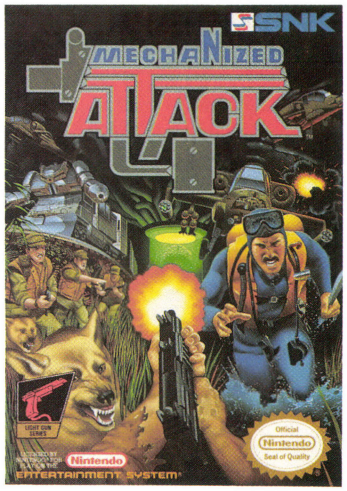
Only one hope remained: A young lad, himself a great magician, who had been imprisoned and frozen during the Great War. The magicians pooled all of their powers in an attempt to revive him. When the boy awoke, they had vanished, leaving him to find his destiny in this strange new world.

In CRYSTALIS, you play the role of the young magician, making your way through Draygon's hostile land in an effort to locate the weapons you will need to defeat him. Draygon's monsters and black magic will threaten you at every turn; but you must not falter — only you can deliver the world from his scourge of evil!

Mechanized Attack

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You must attempt to infiltrate the island base of the rebel forces. But before you even reach the shore, you'll have to contend with enemy gunboats, frogmen, choppers, and destroyers. The island itself is patrolled by enemy soldiers armed with machine guns, daggers and grenades; vicious attack dogs; and lethal airborne probes, programmed to destroy intruders on sight. And if you reach the rebel headquarters, you will face the most terrifying threat of all — only no one has made it back to reveal its nature.



Many unknown dangers lie in wait, but you'll be equipped with a complete arsenal — an assault gun, rocket launcher and grenades — to provide you with a fully mechanized system of attack. You haven't got a minute to waste — it's time to launch your MECHANIZED ATTACK!

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So find the magical key to unlock the door to not only Dexter's, but your own wonderful imagination!

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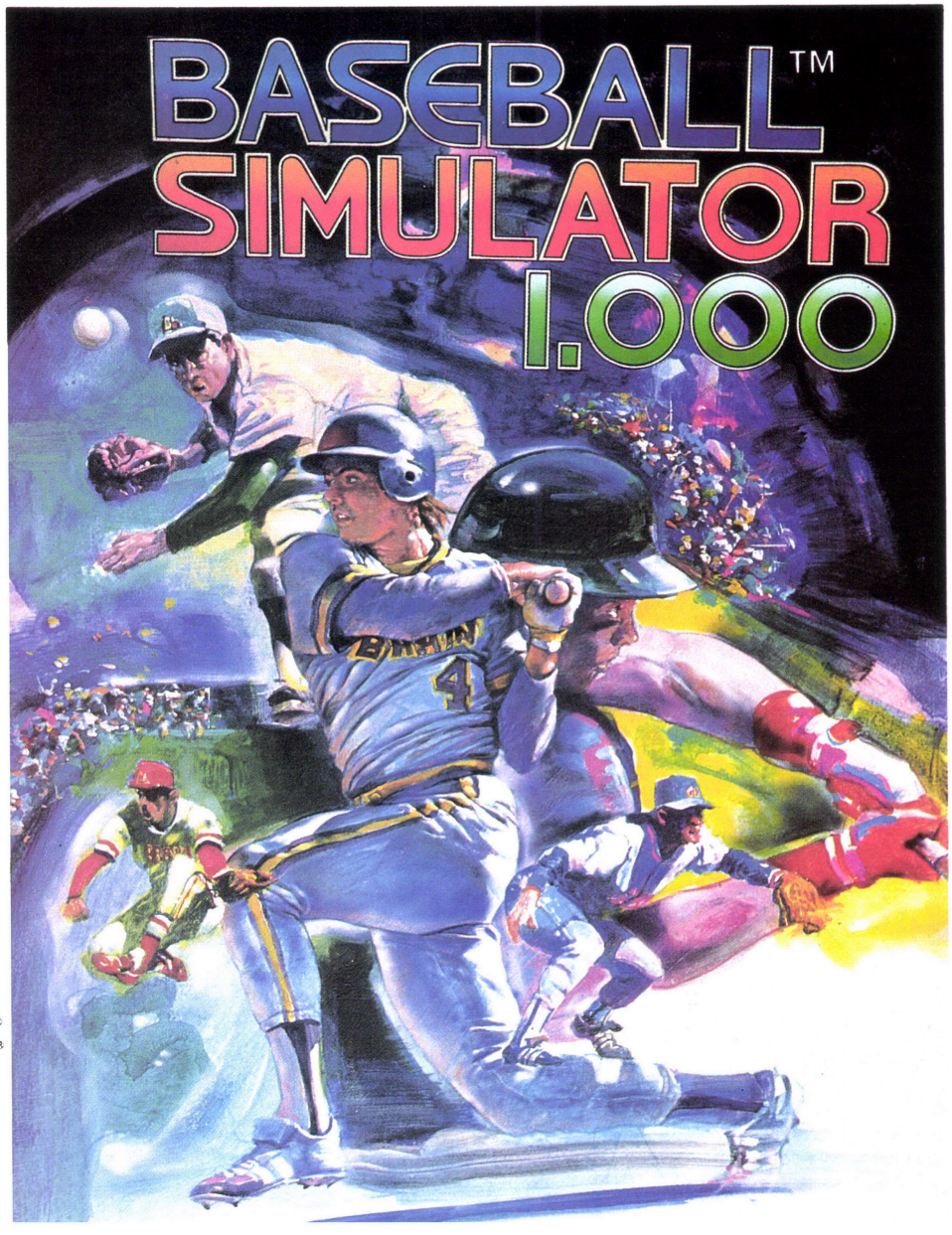
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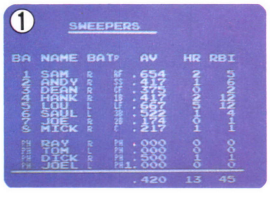
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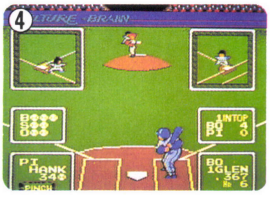
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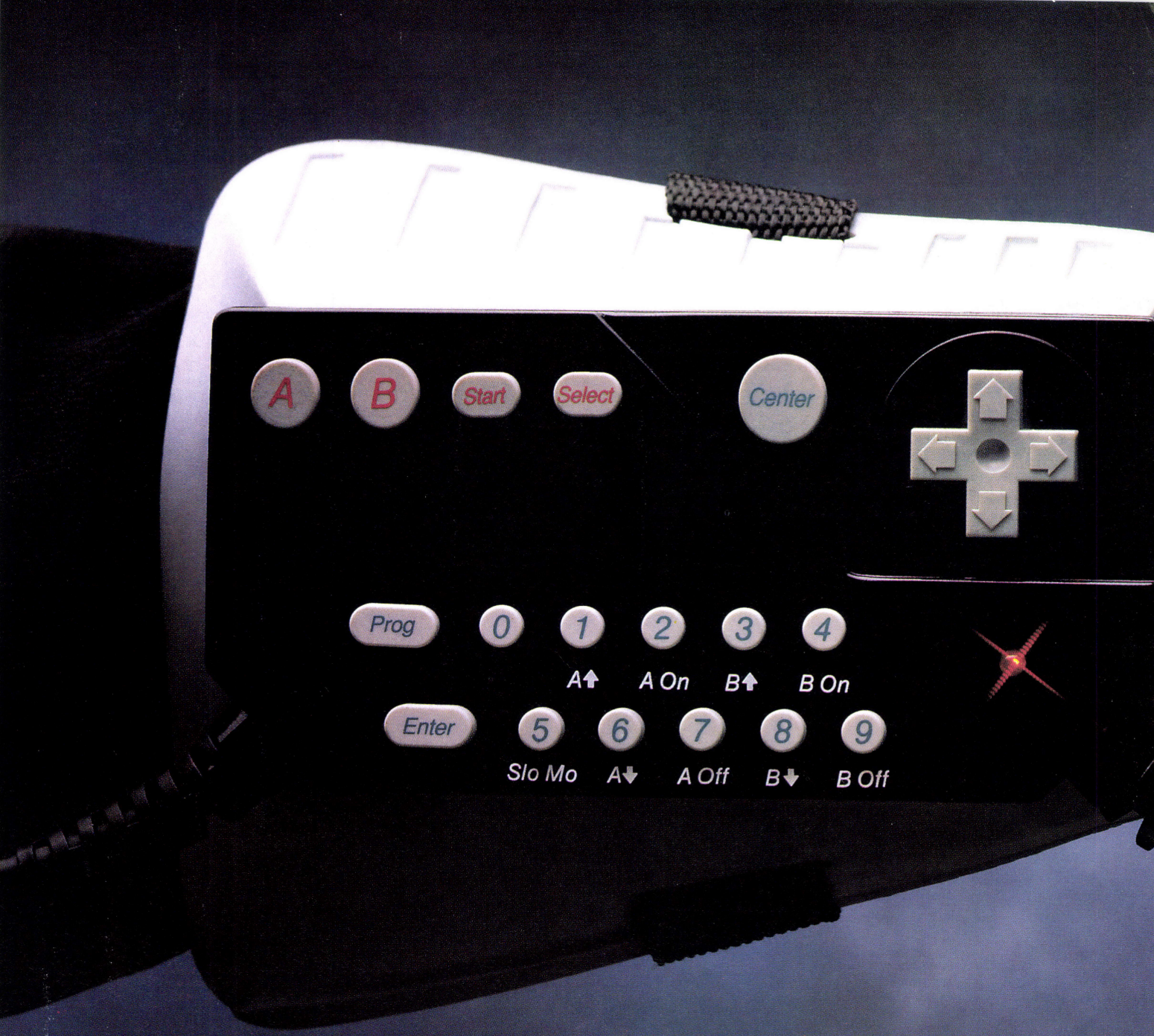
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continued from page 95

player simultaneous game, which is highlighted by the fact that you can hit the other player's ball. That means you are playing cooperatively rather than competitively. Second, you'll notice that as you control your bat around the screen, it's not just going left to right, horizontally, but in a big circle around the playfield. Not only does this require you to concentrate on lining up your shots more precisely, but it also means you have almost four times the playing area to cover, so there's less time to set up for your next shot.

Like all good challenges, *Ballarena* has both obstacles to overcome and bonus items that give you an incentive to play risky. It forces you to choose between going for the ball or the bonus item. The obstacles come in various shapes and forms such as yellow, three-dimensional triangles that block the path of the ball or the gray spheres that catch the ball and hurl it in some random direction. Bonus items, similar to *Arkanoid*, include bat enhancements as well as extra point icons. The weapon power-ups, round icons that usually have a small picture demonstrating what it will do, appear in the center of the screen and move in a spiral motion toward the edge of the screen. To use that item, you'll have to circle the playfield and catch the item as it's about to exit the screen. Weapon power-ups include a multi-ball feature, a double bat, laser fire and more. Extra-point icons, gray cylinders with a blue point value on them, work much the same way. The values range from 10 to 800 points.

There are, however, some bonus items that you may want to avoid. These include such items as the reverse power-up, which causes the controls to work in reverse; turning the knob left will now make the bat move right. There's also a power-up that will make the ball smaller and some surprises that you'll find out about on your own. Finally, I can't forget about the negative-point icon, a gray cylinder with a red number on it. When you pick one up, it will subtract

Continued on page 123

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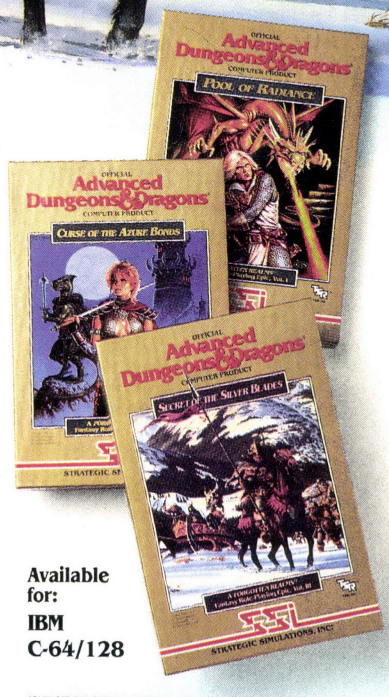
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continued from page 120

anywhere from 10 to 800 points from your overall score.

(We're not sure if the old *Alpine Ski* trick will work on this game. For those of you not familiar with the trick, instead of going around the different flag poles you would run into them, and points would be taken off your score. If you did it right, you could max out the score by backing the counter up from zero to 999,000 by the second round. Our guess is that it would take a lot of work and patience to do the same trick on *Ballarena*.)

Graphically, *Ballarena* is excellent. There's a good use of color that really complements the patterns well. And speaking of patterns, the layouts are amazing—the person who came up with them is to be commended. Unfortunately, the sound is not as fabulous. The ping-pong paddle sound when the ball hits the bat is nice, and I liked the Max Headroom-soundalike voice that sang along with the music, but other than that there wasn't much sound to speak of in *Ballarena*. The challenge stage and working the bat in a circle reminded me of a cross between *Arkanoid* and *Gyruss*. Fisteme was able to make the combination work, and the overall game is very playable (provided you can stay away from some of the bonus items).

Ballarena was a big success in Europe, and for good reason—its a very good game. However, if it's not a hit in the States it will be because of two things. First, I think American game players may be over the *Arkanoid* craze, and had *Ballarena* been released a year ago, it would have done well. Secondly, *Ballarena* looks more like a computer game than an arcade game. It almost stands up and yells, "Hi, I'm really an Amiga game in a coin-op cabinet." In Europe that might be fine but in America, when someone goes to an arcade, they want a game that looks like an arcade game. Even the ads for home video-game systems refer to them as having arcade-quality graphics. Nevertheless, don't cheat yourself out of the opportunity to play this game.

We would like to thank all of you who wrote in and told us how much you liked Destination Arcadia. Due to the overwhelming response, we have decided to increase the number of games we review in this section. This month the games may all have a familiar theme, but each has been given a new life. If you have any questions or comments, don't hesitate to call or write. Send all letters to

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Editor's Note: At press time, Ballarena was in the final stages of completion; some character names and the storyline had not yet been determined.

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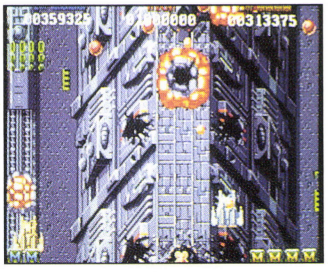
Version: Amiga ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Those blast-happy baddies from the Barrax Empire, last encountered in *Hybris* (Discovery Software for the Amiga), are back. They've captured the hero and heroine of the first episode, and Instel's Galax Lunar Headquarters has placed Battle Group V on full-alert status.



As the Commander of Battle Group V, you must assault Barrax Empire forces on the planet Terrainia and rescue Commanders Berry Mayers and Lori Bergin. The planet's surface is covered with defensive installations, and waves of flying attackers fill the screen. The Barrax Empire has even honeycombed the planet with tunnels replete with death-dealing nasties.



This scrolling shootout upgrades the original game's elements and adds new concepts, like the tunnels, in addition to the horizontal and vertical shooting action. One or two people can play simultaneously, each in control of a powerful fighter ship. The program accumulates each player's score separately, so *Battle Squadron* can be enjoyed cooperatively or competitively. This sci-fi shoot-'em-up features three control modes—joystick, mouse and keyboard—so there's never a traffic jam when two excited participants try to enter their orders at the same time.



Although the user can customize some parameters prior to the onset of play, *Battle Squadron* is a tough challenge at any setting. It's unfortunate that there isn't a special mode for solitary play in which the computer controls the inactive second vessel. A little extra firepower would be a welcome gift to solo-action aces.

Innerprises' *Battle Squadron*, a fast-paced, sci-fi shoot-'em-up, puts your gaming abilities on red-alert status.

Each fighter has a basic weapon, but survival depends on scavenging more advanced arms during the course of the battle. Eliminating certain targets adds new munitions or upgrades your existing ones.

The most powerful is the Nova missile, a "smart bomb" that wipes the screen clear of enemies. Each fighter begins with three and can earn more when a four-ship Barrax squadron (a square capsule with an "M" for missile) floats across the screen. If the fighter touches the capsule, the stockpile of Nova missiles increases by one.

Though they're a fairly new name in software publishing, the Innerprise creators have an impressive pedigree. The design/development team is responsible for such outstanding titles as *Hybris*, *Zoom* and *Sword of Sodan*. Their latest is indisputably their best effort to date.

This group prides itself on an ability to put an arcade "feel" into home computer games. Torben Larsen's graphics are incredible. The detailed, colorful artwork and clever animation would be right at home in any quarter-snatcher. *Battle Squadron* is the best-looking game published for the Amiga so far this year.

The sound is only slightly less fantastic. The driving beat of the score, written by Ron Klaren and performed by Yvo Zoer, seems to push this blastathon forward at an irresistibly frenetic pace. The sound effects aren't as good, but they are certainly acceptable.

Battle Squadron is a pull-out-all-the-stops, cut-loose game. It packs tremendous excitement and playability for joystick jockeys of average or better ability.

—Arnie Katz

Innerprise
128 Cockeysville Road
Hunt Valley, MD 21030
(301) 785-2266

Keef the Thief

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Apple II GS ($49.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Can a young thief start from nothing and gain the title Ruler of the World? It

might depend on the world and how many times he's willing to die to achieve that goal.

The player controls the actions of this light-fingered fellow. Young Keef the Thief apprenticed as a warrior, a priest and a magician, so presumably he's capable in battle and at casting spells. However, it seems that little of his occupations' discipline stayed with him. In the beginning, Keef is weaponless, has no spell books and but a pittance in gold coins. Therefore, it is mostly his other, less reputable skills he must rely upon.

In EA's *Keef the Thief*, the player takes the role of Keef, a light-fingered scoundrel who relies on his less reputable skills to get by.



World-building in the universe of computer adventuring has reached epic proportions. This includes not just the scope of places to go and people (and other things) to meet, but the complexity of ways to interact with them. It is rarely necessary to learn the language (i.e., the game syntax) any more; this has been replaced by menu or icon selections offered on the screen. Nevertheless, the player must still learn the "ways of the world." And, as with most computer adventure games, the way to learn is to just keep on dying till you get it right! *Keef the Thief* attempts to lighten the load by sparking the atmosphere with humor, but after the first few gruesome deaths, the laughter seems tarnished.





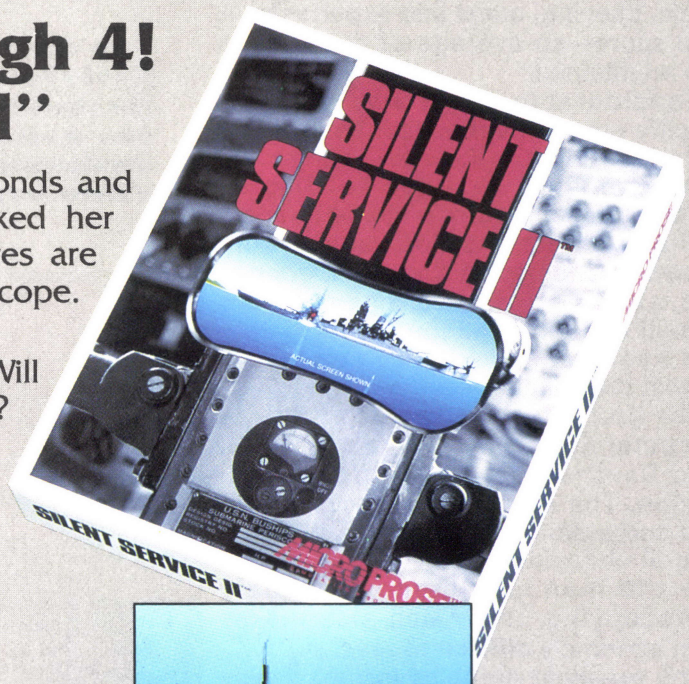
At first glance, the ornate graphics make the screen appear dauntingly complex. On second look, there is an organization to it that conforms to a fairly standard layout. A view window occupies the upper left, a text window lies across the bottom, and a dialog box and selection buttons are in the middle tier. Directional guide (a compass in the shape of a sword) and status indicators are scrolled on the upper right.

Once the game gets going, the initial impression of complexity reasserts itself. For instance, the view window has three modes: first comes the standard, you-are-there viewpoint for various locations; second, a combat mode for those all-too-frequent moments when Keef is in the wrong place at the wrong time; and finally, the spellcasting mode, in which Keef is required to select and prepare certain reagents on a mixing cloth. The color-coding of the border around the view window signifies Keef's

"Flood Tubes 1 through 4! Fire On Command"

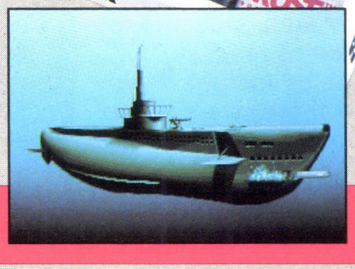
Midway Patrol: June, 1944. Ten more seconds and she'll be within firing range. You've stalked her from Midway to the Yellow Sea. Your eyes are riveted on her. Your hand grips the periscope. This is your only chance to sink her.

Your submarine's fate depends on you. Will you survive... or be another WWII casualty?



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The long-awaited update of the classic game that won Simulation of the Year honors around the world in 1986.

CIRCLE #151 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

status, especially during combat scenes.

Combat introduces a whole new procedure and a multitude of signals to be learned, while guards and other monsters are busy trying take Keef out. The image narrows to a tiny strip representing a 90-degree view. The digital display is supplemented by a map showing Keef's position in relation to his attackers, his current hit points and his readiness to attack. A compass-like device indicates which way he's facing,

Keef starts with only his bare hands, which are essentially useless against most attackers, so weapons and armor have to be purchased or pinched. The opportunity to bolt exists, assuming Keef didn't pick the fight, but it's not very reliable.

Spells must be prepared ahead of time, according to recipes in spell books learned along the way. Preparation requires reagents picked up at the local apothecary, mixed in the proper magic circle. Sometimes they don't blend properly, but when they do, and if Keef has the points to cast them, they are effective against enemies or for protection. If misused, Keef can be hurt and lose any magic points he's built up.

Keef can also acquire an extensive inventory of weapons, armor, spells and reagents, artifacts and "items." Gold is measured among Keef's 15 status elements, along with health, experience, hit points and magic points; and he also possesses a dozen ability levels. He is scored in five categories: treasure, magic, thieving, quest and experience. A total score—an average of the five—is also maintained.

Considerable effort was made to simplify play through cursor control and button-clicking. On the view window the pointer design changes to display options to use: an arrow shape to show available directions, four converging arrowheads for going through a door or gate, a dollar sign for selecting a store or a small dialogue balloon for indicating that Keef can speak to somebody. In combat the pointer becomes a sword.

The protection method requires the computerist to play a game of Three Card Santi at the beginning of each session. The card names necessary to pass successfully are printed in black on several chocolate-brown pages bound into the manual—intended to defy photocopying, this catch also makes them extremely difficult to read.

The excellent graphics include Tandy 16-color support, and there is a score of some ten original tunes which can set the mood in stereo for those possessing a Roland, Ad-Lib or CMS music card or installed system. Happy thieving!

—Ross Chamberlain

Electronic Arts
1810 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(800) 245-4525

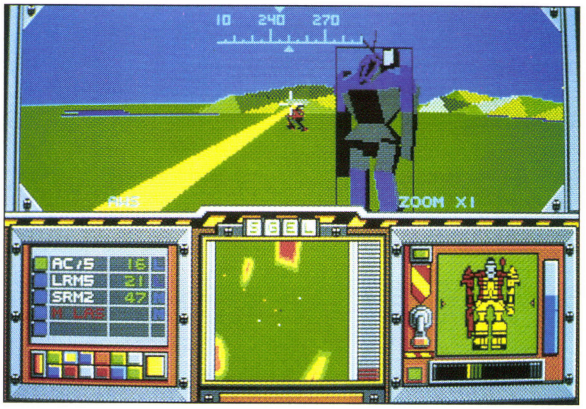
Mechwarrior

ACTIVISION

Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

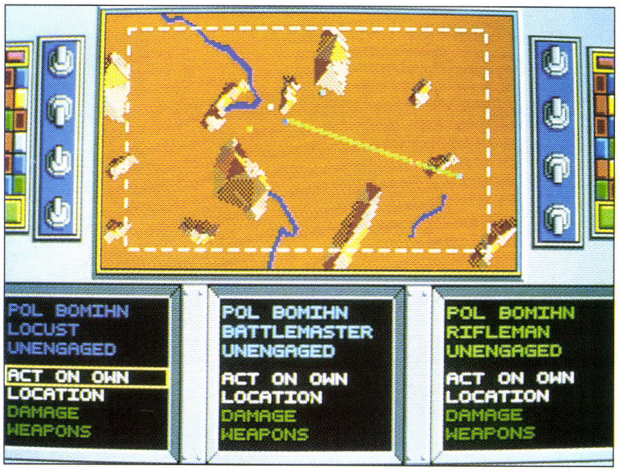
Depicting life in an alternate universe of the 31st century, *Mechwarrior* features five rival houses engaged in a feudal struggle for dominance. Their primary means of battle are heavily armed mechanoids piloted by humans acting essentially as the brains behind the brawn.



To survive in Activision's *Mechwarrior*, you must take employment as a mercenary.

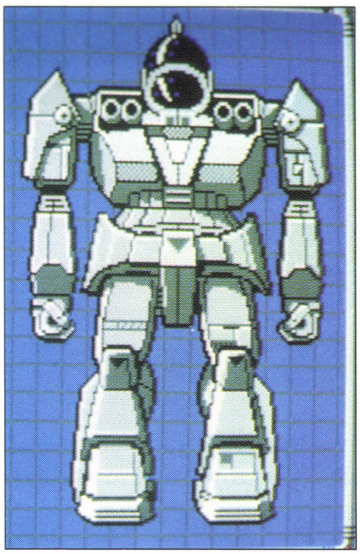
Mechwarrior is licensed and approved by FASA, creators of the *Battletech* universe and publishers of the popular board game and novels utilizing its setting. A portion of this universe was revealed to computerists in *Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception*, an Infocom release last year.

First-person cockpit perspective and spectacular three-dimensional polygon-fill graphics bring the *Battletech* universe to life as never before. *Mechwarrior* players assume the character of a usurped noble and must remain incognito until they solve the plot and are restored to power. The only way to survive is by seeking employment as a mercenary for one or more of the rival houses while searching for clues to complete the quest.



At first, the player-character possesses minimal funds and a badly battered

Jenner (one of the weakest and most lightly armed Mech's). Under such circumstances, don't expect to win many of the initial battles by overpowering the enemy. It's vital to employ the tried-and-true tactics of fire and movement. By presenting an elusive target and constantly seeking weaknesses to exploit, it's possible to win enough battles to upgrade to a more powerful Mech then begin working toward command of a four-Mech formation, known as a Lance.



Unfortunately, the game does not depict all of the known Mech's from the Battletech universe; but eight major types are included, each wielding unique offensive and defensive characteristics. The lightest Mech's—Jenners, Locusts and Phoenix Hawks—must rely on speed and maneuverability to attain advantageous firing positions (such as into the rear armor of larger Mech's). Heavy Mech's, Warhammers, Marauders and Battlemasters can use superior firepower to decimate the majority of their opponent's. Medium Mech's, such as Riflemen and Shadow Hawks, comprise a blend of the strengths and weaknesses of the two extremes.

They are best utilized by concentrating firepower on the opponents' appendages. By blowing off an opponent's arm containing an autocannon, one might gain an advantage in firepower. Also, if severely outgunned, a player might destroy the leg of the opposing Mech, thereby immobilizing it and providing the chance to escape. Indeed, learning how to best utilize equipment under the stress of real-time combat is the most addictive aspect of the game.

Individual engagements take place in a variety of different terrain types, including arctic conditions that significantly reduce heat buildup problems. Players convey orders to fellow Mechs from the command screen, essentially an overview of the battlefield that includes ridges, hills and major terrain features.

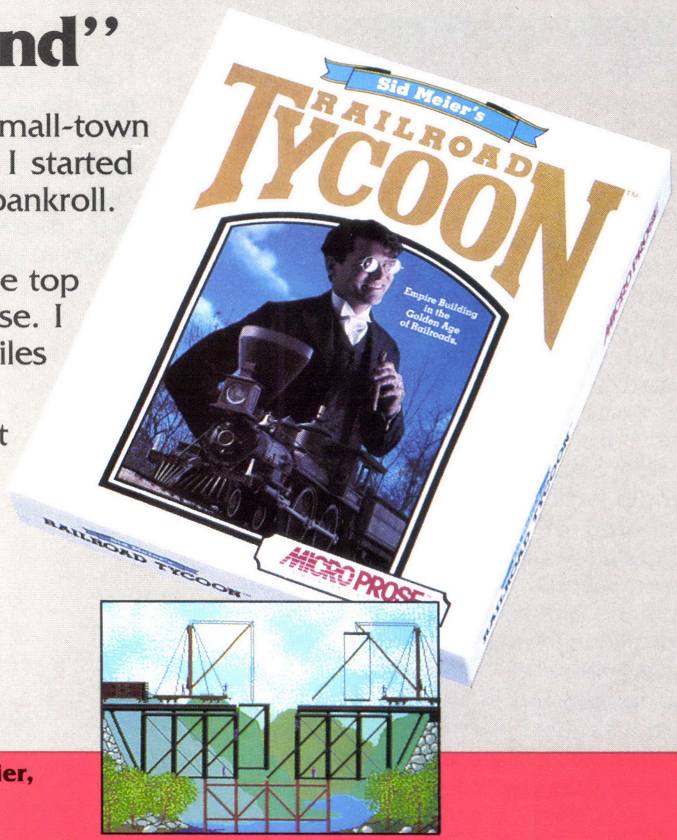
Once all orders are complete, the view shifts to cockpit perspective including, among other things, a head-up display.

"This Land Is My Land"

I started my rail empire in 1830 right in small-town Chicago. My "empire" wasn't much when I started — an engine, some resources and a small bankroll. But all that turned around.

With some wheeling and dealing I got to the top and now I'm looking down on everyone else. I passed Carnegie and Vanderbilt a thousand miles back and a half a million dollars ago.

This land is my land all right. And I'll make it thrive. Why don't you?



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Yet another advance in computer gaming from Sid Meier, creator of F-15 Strike Eagle, Silent Service, Pirates!, Red Storm Rising, and F-19 Stealth Fighter.

CIRCLE #152 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

As the action begins, enemy Mechs lumber into view from the distance, becoming realistically identifiable as the range closes.

The 3-D terrain scrolls smoothly, commensurate with the speed one's Mech is traveling, and the overall affect of motion and distance is mesmerizing. The impression that one is locked in a life-or-death struggle is reinforced as the screen jumps when a Mech is impacted by enemy weapons. The atmosphere is further enhanced if one possesses either an Ad-lib or Roland MT-32 sound board to intensify the opening score and the victory reward sequences.

Fighting battles is so much fun, in fact, that it's easy to lose sight of the quest that one is supposed to be pursuing. *Mechwarrior* is an action/strategy game par excellence that's not to be missed.

—Ed Dille

Activision
3885 Bohannon Dr.
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(415) 329-0800

Arkanoid II: The Revenge of Doh

TAITO

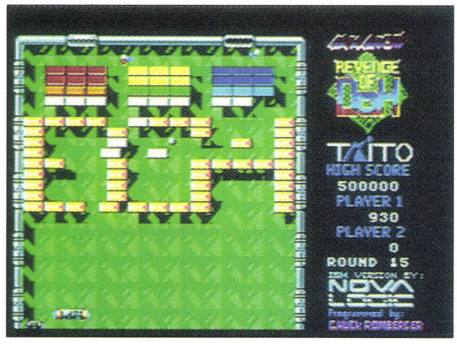
Versions: Apple IIGS ($34.95), Commodore 64 ($29.95), IBM PC ($34.95)

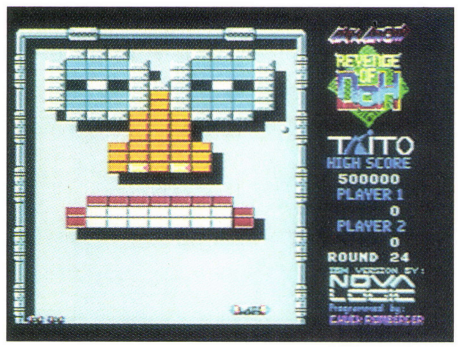
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

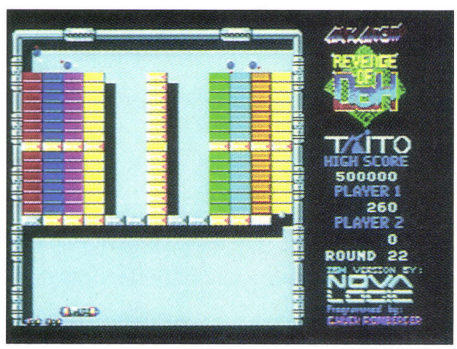
Arkanoid II is not necessarily the most extensive step beyond *Arkanoid*, but it is certainly a significant evolution of this classic game genre.

Some elements are carried over from the original *Arkanoid*, such as the jaunty musical theme and the forgettable story line. The paddle, now called the Vaus2, is moved across the bottom of the screen to bounce energy balls up into the playfield, where they destroy barriers consisting of bricks in a variety of configurations (some take several hits to demolish). A construction set allows the player to replace any of the original 67 screens with the "screen of [his/her] dreams."

An innovation in *Arkanoid* was that some bricks concealed power capsules, which were released when the brick was destroyed. If they were caught by the Vaus2, special powers were granted to the paddle, such as the ability to shoot lasers at the bricks or catch an energy ball and release it at will from another location. Some capsules affect the size of the paddle, some allow the creation of several energy balls at once; one awards extra Vaus paddles, while another opens a gate that leads you into the next level.







***Arkanoid II: The Revenge of Doh*, by Taito, shows a significant evolution of the *Breakout* genre of games.**

Arkanoid II contains all of the original power capsules and has added some more, including one that creates black Mega energy balls that destroy any type of block. Another allows an energy ball to continuously divide into three, and there is a super bonus capsule that randomly awards up to 16 energy balls (the exact number depends on the computer's speed) or continuous laser fire. Sometimes the energy balls awarded are the black ones; this produces a slaughter of blocks!

Arkanoid II also features better sound effects and a storable vanity board. It's nearly as addictive as its predecessor and would have been equally so except for the graphics. They are beautiful, but Taito's or Nova Logic's programmers (Chuck Rosenberg is credited with the IBM version) went one step too far in attempting to improve on the original. He replaced the space-black background with a variety of highly confusing tile patterns. It is possible to compensate for this in slow and medium play, but when the screen is filled with bouncing energy balls and aliens, there is eye-twisting frustration instead of the excitement of rapid and skillful play.

Taito successfully brought the arcade experience to the IBM PC screen, offering not only CGA but VGA, EGA, Hercules and Tandy 1000 graphics support, plus support for the Ad Lib music system and Tandy's three-voice capabilities. All can be selected on the opening screen the first time the game is booted up, then



You'll have to be smooth as ice.

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A collection of thirty-two mismatched citizens suddenly becomes the only army to oppose the invaders.

Innocent civilian equipment — skis, hang-gliders, snowmobiles and cable cars — suddenly become indispensable implements of war.

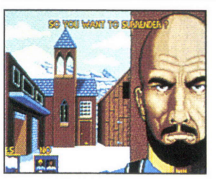
Your manpower and hardware alone will never stop the enemy. Your community's only hope is superior strategy and leadership.

The strategy and leadership are up to you.

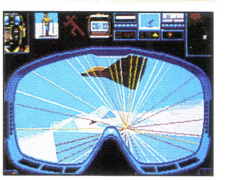
Midwinter — gigantic, innovative, unforgettable!

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stored for future operation. It's possible to play from the keyboard but joystick or mouse play is recommended.

Arkanoid II is a worthy successor to *Arkanoid* and, with only a smattering of the aforementioned periods of frustration, can be counted on to provide many hours of exciting and skill-building contesting.

—R. C.

Taito Software
267 W. Esplanade
North Vancouver
B.C., Canada V7M 1A5
(604) 984-3344

Nuclear War

NEW WORLD COMPUTING

Systems: Amiga ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

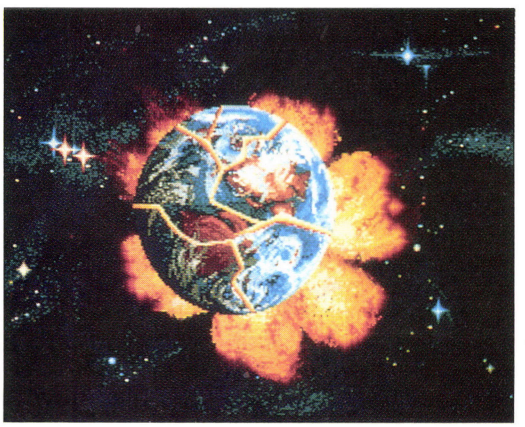
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Game designers have tackled some weighty subjects lately. First, Electronic Arts took on the task of playing god with *Populous*. Now New World Computing presents *Nuclear War*, a lighthearted look at nuclear Armageddon. The prospect of this event actually unfolding is diminishing, so New World was able to look at the subject from a humorous perspective, inserting some *Monty Python*-style fun at every turn, including the documentation. *Nuke,* the Nuclear Age magazine, contains all the information necessary to play the game, along with some funny corporate ads such as "Murray's Used Missiles."

Nuclear War is played against four computer-controlled adversaries, chosen from a list of ten world leaders. Opponents are picked by the gamer, selected at random or can be a combination of both. There are five distinct personalities among the ten leaders; standard, pacifist, liar, chaotic and warmonger. For example: Ronnie Raygun is a warmonger, Jimi Farmer is a pacifist and Ayatollah Kookamamie is a chaotic type.

Actions are mouse-entered on the diplomacy terminal. Each corner window faces one of the other four leaders. To the right of each leader is a face showing the player's attitude toward that leader. These expressions range from a smiley face to a hostile snarl. Beneath these faces are numbers ranging from 99 (peace) to 0 (all-out war), representing the leaders' attitude toward the player. The faces of the leaders change to reflect any alterations in their feelings.





New World Computing's *Nuclear War* is a satirical look at the political scene *and* a refreshing change of pace from simulators that take themselves too seriously.

The center of the display reveals the gamer-controlled territory. Five cities are represented by icons indicating their size, from a tiny lean-to to a booming metropolis.

Clicking on the face of a leader puts that nation's territory in the center screen to begin carrying out offensive strategies. Choose a target city, then either conduct a propaganda campaign or launch a nuclear strike. Propaganda strikes can cause citizens to defect to your side or may backfire, with usually humorous results. To launch a nuclear strike against a city, a launch vehicle must be readied. There are four types of missiles and two bombers. The advantage of a bomber is its capacity for multiple strikes and invulnerability to all but the largest defense system.

There are two other options available. Any nation's industry can be converted to build more nuclear weapons. Building on consecutive turns is considered stockpiling, which will instill distrust in the other world leaders. A country can take a defensive stance by deploying an air-defense system. One system is only effective against a missile strike, and another will blast anything out of the sky. Each air-defense system is only active for one turn.



After selection is completed, the display changes to a map of the world. Each leader's actions are carried out in sequence, with full animation. This style of graphic presentation is one of the better touches in *Nuclear War*. Tons of subtle animations are featured, from the blast of a nuclear explosion, to a 16-ton weight dropping on a leader's city as the result of a missed propaganda strike.

Nuclear War is a refreshing change from simulations that are all business. Everything is tongue-in-cheek, which

COMMAND™ HQ.

The latest from Dan Bunten, designer of the award-winning **M.U.L.E.** and **Seven Cities of Gold**.

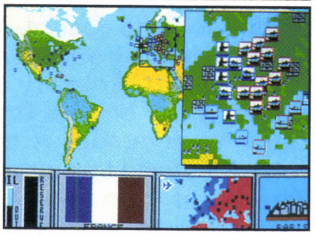


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❑ **YES** Then you'll love **Command HQ**, the new strategic challenge from award-winning game designer Dan Bunten. Lead a global superpower during World War I, II, III or even IV. Command fighter squadrons, armored tank divisions and infantry, and billion-dollar nuclear subs and warships. Keep a constant check on your economic strength, military spending and natural resources. And, in modern times, keep your finger poised on the biggest button of them all. But be warned: **Command HQ** doesn't regard nuclear weapons casually, and neither should you.



❑ **NO** Then **Command HQ** just might help you enjoy pressure a little more. The game features a streamlined graphic interface designed to convey a world of information quickly and precisely. And colorful animations let you see all the action: watch armored tank divisions occupy a city; see fighter planes strafe enemy artillery. Play against the computer or via modem with a friend. **Command HQ** lets you send messages to your opponent during play, so you can make treaties, propose bargains, or just exchange a few choice words.



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MICROPLAY™ SOFTWARE

MASTERS OF STRATEGY SERIES

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makes for an enjoyable game experience. Some people may be offended by the treatment of what is a very serious subject. If so, they'll miss out on a terrific game. There are several games available that simulate war more accurately, but none are as enjoyable as *Nuclear War*.

—Michael Holda

New World Computing
14922 Calvert St.
Van Nuys, CA 91411
(818) 785-0401

Gunboat

ACCOLADE

System: Amiga ($49.95), Atari ST ($49.95), Commodore 64 ($29.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

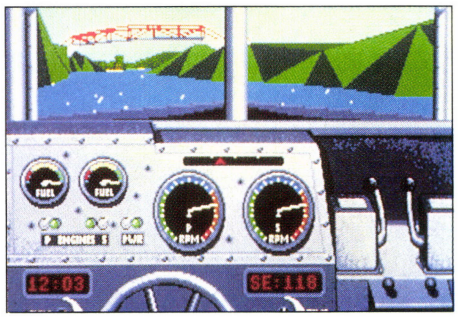
The evolution of tactics is not always dependent on technological developments. Riverine warfare has basically retained it's form since the Civil War, despite advances in the vehicles of execution. Actions tend to be quick, fluid and violent, with ambush tactics favoring frontal assaults.

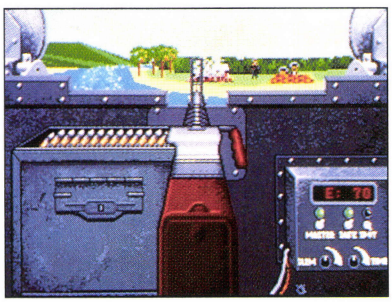
During the Vietnam conflict, the Brown Water Navy gained prominence as the primary interdiction force in the vital Mekong delta region. U.S. PBR's (Patrol Boat, River) were equipped with .30- and .50-calibre machine guns, grenade launchers and mortars. They were capable of achieving speeds of nearly 30 knots and turning 180 degrees in less than one boat length. Their crews used them with precision and finesse and gained an appreciation for their ability to bring destruction to the enemy. *Gunboat* captures the essence of modern riverine warfare with equal finesse and appreciation for the subject.

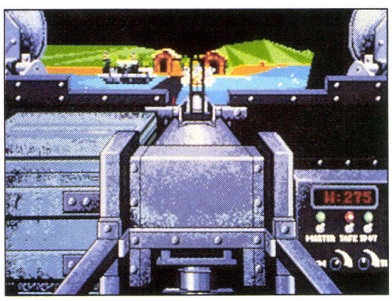
If the look and feel of *Gunboat* seem familiar, they should. Designer Tom "*Steel Thunder*" Loughry used the same basic program engine from the earlier program, incorporating improved graphics routines throughout.

The prior release had undefined terrain features, but *Gunboat* uses bit-mapped graphics for the vehicles and integrates these with a 3-D polygon fill landscape. The resulting effect is impressive, particularly in VGA/EGA mode. Players find themselves gliding along dark, meandering jungle rivers, passing through narrow canyons and wondering what awaits them beyond the next bend. The constrictive nature of the environment is felt as well as seen, especially when enemy units appear suddenly via muzzle flashes, their bullets splashing close aboard and thumping the sides of the PBR.

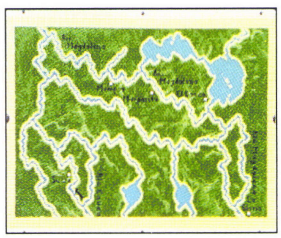
The game opens with a spectacular digitized photograph (VGA only) of a PBR conducting an inspection of a sampan, complete with a stirring rendition of "Flight of the Valkyries." Players select which theater of operations they desire: Vietnam, Colombia or Panama. A service record is maintained for each player, listing total combat time, awards, promotions and numbers of the various enemy types successfully engaged (Colombia or Panama are only accessible after one has achieved sufficient promotion as a PBR commander). The service record is updated for unsuccessful missions as well and only close out when the player/character is killed in action.







The designer of Access' *Gunboat*, Tom Loughry, used the same engine as he did in *Steel Thunder*.



Many aspects of the simulation place it closer to the arcade genre than some purists may desire. Ammunition and fuel supplies are endless. It is possible to shoot down enemy missiles with machine-gun fire, and one can escape a bad situation (i.e., taking on water deep in enemy territory) by simply exiting the mission.

Because advanced missions are generally up river from prior ones, the same obstacles have to be overcome again before reaching a new location. The ambush aspect of riverine warfare would have been further enhanced if enemy positions could have been randomized each time a scenario was selected.

Despite these minor shortfalls, *Gunboat* is an engaging and highly addictive program. Players may find themselves so engrossed by the action's intensity at higher levels that they lose sight of the mission objectives or make a wrong turn while preoccupied.

The intermingling of hostile and friendly targets is particularly accurate. Armchair warriors are forced to identify contacts prior to engagement or face

possible court martial. Such constraints depict real world considerations and raise *Gunboat* a cut above straight shoot-'em-ups. Great PBR Captains aren't made in a day; compu-sailors will return to these waters again and again.

—E. D.

Accolade
550 S. Winchester Blvd.
Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 985-1700

Living Jigsaws

MILES COMPUTING

Version: IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Jigsaw puzzles have always had a special place in American life. They've lost some popularity in recent years, but many families still enjoy putting them together at special times, such as the holidays, and they are perennial vacation pastimes. Miles Computing and the Fokos Group took this old theme, added a unique twist and brought it to the home computer as *Living Jigsaws*.

The twist is very interesting: Each of the puzzles features scenes that become fully animated when completed. Even more unique, each separate piece correctly animates its own portion of the picture, regardless of its orientation.

The first step in using *Living Jigsaws* is to select which of the 15 included puzzles to tackle, then decide between super easy, easy, medium and hard difficulty levels. The harder the level, the smaller the pieces. The next choice is the type of piece; they vary from the usual interconnecting pieces common in "real" jigsaw puzzles to geometric shapes such as triangles and diamonds or even squares.

Two basic screens are utilized during puzzle construction. Since the puzzle screen gets pretty crowded if too many pieces are scattered about its surface, it's wise to leave most of them neatly

"This Is No Joy Ride"

Our ship burst through the Spinward Marches like a flash of light. My heart's pounding fast. Five trained soldiers running on nervous energy. Someone's racing up behind us. I can't tell who or where they are. If I can just get us through the Yres system, we may get to the starport in time.

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Based on MegaTraveller, the world's most popular science fiction role-playing game, from Game Designers' Workshop.

laid out on the piece screens until they are actually needed.

Pieces can be placed in any order, and if they are within three pixels of their correct location and properly oriented, they will be permanently locked into place with an audible "click." A beep sounds when a piece is left in a wrong place. Pieces are moved and placed by an on-screen "hand." While it's not quite as flexible as a real mitt, it can hold any number of pieces, then place them in any order desired.

All control in the program is via the keyboard. In addition to picking up, rotating and placing the pieces, several keys help in the puzzle-solving process. These include keys to correctly orient all the pieces, correctly place the current piece or even to correctly place all border pieces. One key even changes all the pieces to a solid color, making puzzle completion even more difficult.

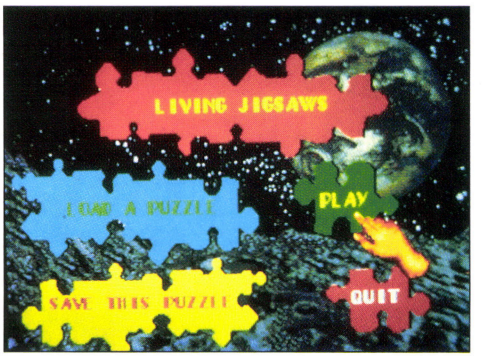
The VGA graphics are truly outstanding, and the other graphics are quite acceptable. The animated backgrounds look good throughout and are enjoyable to watch.

The animated drawings have one drawback. They use up a lot of processing power, thus computerists with anything less than a 386-based machine will probably have to turn off the animation to get acceptable response during puzzle construction. With the animation off, the response time is adequate, and the program runs smoothly.

While *Living Jigsaws* is not the first computer puzzle-making game, its use of animation during puzzle layout and its wide variety of possible pieces make it a game to enjoy for a long time.

—R. Bradley Andrews

Miles Computing
Distributed by Electronic Arts
1810 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(800) 245-4525



Miles Computing's *Living Jigsaws* uses animation during the layout of a puzzle, which makes it a game not likely to end up on your shelf.

Harpoon

THREE-SIXTY

Version: IBM PC ($59.95); Amiga, Atari ST (Macintosh to follow)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Harpoon puts gamers smack-dab in the middle of NATO-USSR confrontations, assuming the role of either the Commander of NATO's North Atlantic Task Force or his Soviet counterpart in Russia's Northern Fleet. The compu-commander uses a database of Soviet and NATO weapons systems, pictured in state-of-the-art high-res graphics, including aircraft, ships and submarines. It adds up to an authentic, highly realistic military simulation enhanced by maps, geographical overviews, climate conditions and beautifully detailed drawings.

More than a stand-alone game, *Harpoon* is an operating system that will be supplemented by future releases called "battle sets," each depicting a different theater of potential conflict. The first is included in the game, with 13 scenarios portraying operations in the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) gap. These range from small surface engagements involving a half-dozen units to major campaigns involving up to 375 ships, aircraft and submarines. Within a scenario, players may toggle a number of options on or off including: nuclear release, maintenance failures, starting level of ordinance and others.

Mission objectives differ for each scenario—as well as for each commander—but the majority revolve around seeking out and destroying a set number of enemy units. The player is aided in this endeavor by flawless intelligence. Once an enemy unit is detected, it's assumed that all units of the force possess equal targeting solutions. Although quite unrealistic, this mechanic simplifies the planning of attacks.

Players may also directly control radars, sonars, weapons employment, force disposition, flight plans, sonobuoy placement and a myriad of other tasks that would normally be relegated to subordinate commanders. While this increases the game's level of detail, it does so with a directly proportional reduction of realism. In other words, *Harpoon* is intended as an operational theater commander simulation of naval warfare. By taking the middle ground between tactical and strategic simulation, it has fallen prey to that nemesis of war-gaming: omnipotence. A player's ability to control virtually every aspect of a conflict is neither realistic nor desirable, from an operational command view.

Players control their forces with a series

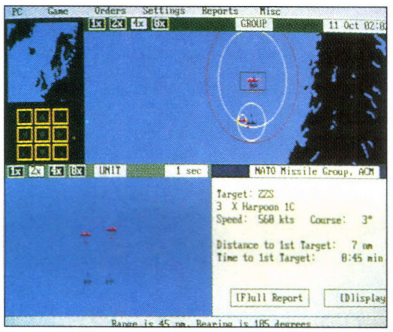
of pull-down menus. A player's initial considerations, regardless of scenario, must be to ensure that early-warning patrols and picket units are positioned and the desired emission control (radar and sonar posture) is set. Passive sensors are desired over active sensors in most cases, except for bases. This is because the counter-detection range of a radar or sonar exceeds the range at which targets can be located. A good posture is to activate sensors intermittently.

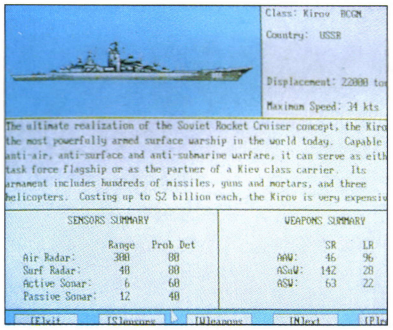
Once contact is made, air assets should be considered the primary means of attack, regardless of the threat. Submarines are most effectively engaged with long-range aircraft (Nimrods or P-3 Orions) or ship-based helicopters. Incoming bombers should be intercepted by fighters before they can reach missile launch range, if possible, and surface groups should be attacked by standoff (missile-capable) aircraft. Naturally, not all of these assets are available in a given scenario, so players must adapt their tactics accordingly.

Perhaps the most highly touted program in recent history, many players anticipated Harpoon's release for 18 months. Those who rushed out to purchase the initial release this past Christmas were disappointed; the game was riddled with flaws. Fortunately, Three-Sixty stood behind its product, corrected the vast majority of the problems and provided free updates to registered users. Consequently, players may now experience a simulation of modern naval warfare that, although not perfect, is the finest available.

Occasionally, the program allows the inexplicable to happen. Ships traverse dry land, and aircraft are not destroyed despite their inability to land due to the bases being destroyed. Minor flaws and the aforementioned "omnipotent" factor notwithstanding, *Harpoon* comes a great deal closer toward proper representation of modern naval warfare than any of its predecessors.

—E. D.





Three-Sixty's *Harpoon* puts gamers in the middle of NATO-USSR skirmishes.

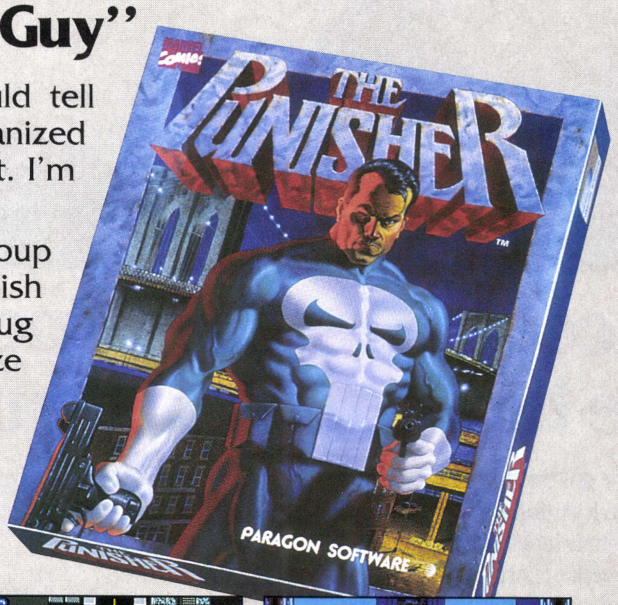
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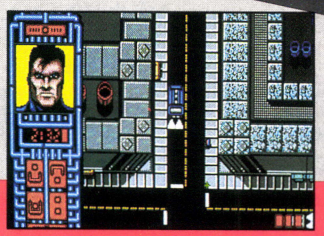
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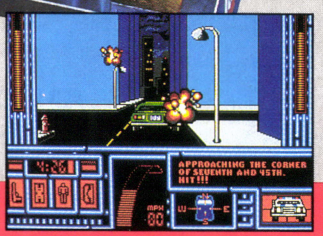


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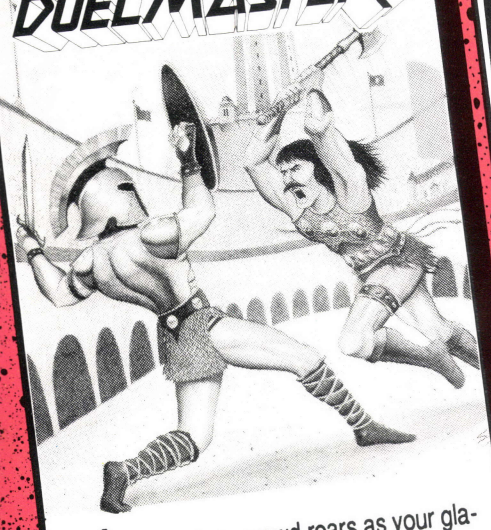
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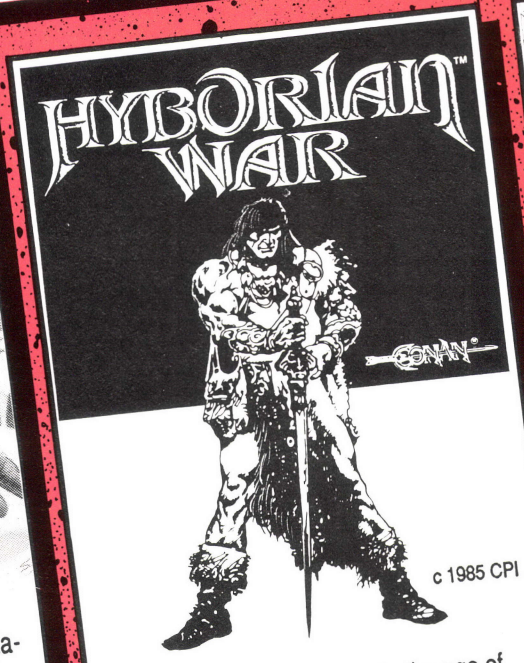
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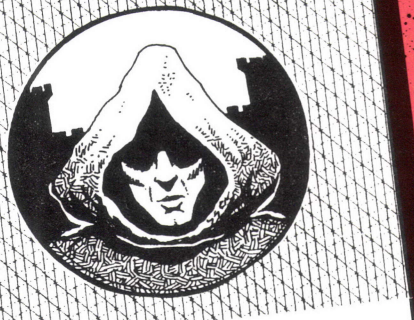
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STEPPING FORWARD

JIM NANGANO GETS READY FOR THE BIG TIME!

BY BILL KUNKEL



Like the chorus girl who gets her big break when the female lead falters, Jim Nangano spent much of his programming career as a reliable understudy, backing up the big names while awaiting his chance to step into the spotlight.

Now, at last, it looks as if that opportunity has arrived. After years of toiling as a one-man band for low-rent wages and picking up the projects that fell through the cracks, Nangano is really strutting his stuff for MicroLeague Sports Association. MLSA has already published *WWF Wrestling II* for the

Amiga and PC computers, programmed by Nangano from a design by Subway Software. Nangano will also spearhead the development of a new line of stat-based sports games for MLSA. But the journey from game-development extra to silicon stardom is rarely an easy one, and Nangano suffered more than his share of setbacks along the way.

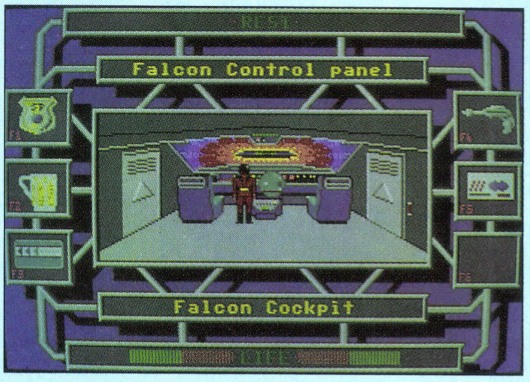
"I was always into electronic gadgets," says Nangano, who started his career in entertainment programming with a programmable calculator and a fondness for nonelectronic fantasy role-playing games. "I wanted to produce an electronic version of a D&D-type game in 1978, but I found my calculator wasn't really powerful enough," he explains with a laugh. "So I made my first of many upgrades, to an Ohio Scientific Challenger 1-P, a kit computer with all of 8K memory."

Nangano used his newfound computing power to produce a text-only FRPG written in BASIC. "The people I showed it to loved it. People would sit in front of the screen for *hours* playing it." From Nangano's point of view, however, this amateur effort only proved that he needed additional computing horsepower, so he traded up to a TRS-80. "Yeah, I got a 'Trash-80'," he admits. "The Apple II was just so darned expensive. Spending $2,000 on a computer seemed kind of crazy to me in 1979, especially since I wasn't a programmer yet." But, true to form, he quickly outgrew his latest acquisition. "I don't know; it had no sound—I wasn't happy."

Nangano was so encouraged by his early programming efforts that he bit the bullet at this point and bought himself an Atari 800. Finally, he was happy—for a while, at least. Then a friend dropped a bombshell on him: "Forget about BASIC; everything is going to have to be written in assembly if you want to sell it." So, he purchased a book on assembly programming and taught himself.

But before abandoning BASIC, he wrote an Extended BASIC program in 1982 that added an additional dozen or so commands to the language and won a contest with it on CompuServe (the online service). He also sent a copy to Fernando Herrera of First Star Software, who immediately phoned Nangano with some pertinent advice: "Write a game."

The result was *Flip & Flop* (First Star), a *Q*Bert* clone that was greatly enlivened by its enchanting animation routines featuring kangaroos and monkeys leaping and climbing from section to section along a color-changing grid. Nangano was signed to an exclusive contract by First Star for five years on the basis of this impressive debut performance. "After seven years in the military, it must have seemed like a good idea at the time," he observes with a dose of mild cynicism.



"This game was so far ahead..." Nangano said of Omnicron Conspiracy, a program released by Epyx in 1989.

He served as a jack-of-all-trades at First Star. "I was the 'fireman,' the guy who put out the fires. I did anything and everything. After [Mike] Reidel did the Atari version of *Spy vs. Spy*, it had to be taken to the C-64, which I did in a month. When *Flip & Flop* was finished on the Atari, First Star had some college student working for five months on the C-64 translation and it was terrible. I took over the project and had it up and running within three weeks. I'm a pretty quick study. I just have an intuitive understanding of how this stuff works."

Nangano's next major project turned into one of his more disappointing career experiences. "I began work on the engine that would theoretically become a game—*The Omnicron Conspiracy.*" First Star President Richard Spitalny quickly saw the wisdom in an engine that could be used to drive an entire line of adventure games and commissioned a game design to complement the Nangano system.

The job eventually fell to Subway Software, which produced an epic-length science-fiction adventure starring Ace Powers, captain in the Star Police. "I devised the engine, the graphics compiler and everything else to make it run on the C-64, using an IBM development system. I had a three-level disk, characters moved, locations changed.

"But there was a problem. First Star decided it had to be able to run on tape, because they wanted to sell it overseas and, at that time [1985], that market was mostly tape-driven." Nangano had only one problem with this notion: "*How can a random-access adventure run from tape?*"

The answer was, it couldn't; but nonetheless, they tried. Then Epyx decided that all the graphics to date had to be redrawn. "That totally destroyed the game. This game was so far ahead—if it had been released when it was ready to be released, on disk, it would have blown *everybody* out of the water. Epyx eventually finished it [an IBM version was released in 1989], but it wasn't even fun by that point."

The entire episode left a bad taste in Nangano's mouth. When asked if he will someday attempt to revive the engine, he explained: "I don't even own it. First Star owns it. Or Epyx."

It was back to being the First Star fireman at that point. "I did *Spy vs. Spy 3: Arctic Antics* for them. We made some changes in the earlier formulas: instead of the spies beating on one another with sticks, we had them throw snowballs. There was a polar bear who came out of the snowstorms, there was ice the spies could slide on, and the animations involved things like

a spy transforming into an ice cube if he falls off a cliff. And I worked on the graphics for *Millennium Warrior* [scheduled to be published by Capstone/Intracorp later this year], which is a one-on-one combat game set in different time periods."

It was during this period that Nangano tired of putting out fires. He took on the services of the International Computer Group and left First Star to start his own development house, UpFront Software, in 1989. UpFront's first major assignment was a new edition of MicroLeague's *WWF Wrestling* for the Amiga and IBM computers. Ironically, however, Nangano was once again inheriting a project from Mike Reidel, who programmed the original ST and C-64 versions according to a design by Nangano's old *Omnicron* partners, Subway Software. "I basically took the C-64 version and added a bunch of stuff to make it look better. I also redesigned the interface and added digital sound effects and a modem-play feature," Nangano explained.

WWF Wrestling is a strategy game that uses real grapplers from Vince McMahon's World Wrestling Federation (WWF) in digitized footage from their matches. Hulk Hogan, "Macho Man" Randy Savage, "The Million Dollar Man" Ted DiBiase and other members of the grunt 'n' groan fraternity appear in all their verbose glory, giving interviews, making dramatic ring entrances and even wrestling.

As someone who had never been exposed to the world of mat mayhem, wrestling came as a real surprise to Nangano. "It's quite a circus. It's enjoyable to watch, like a movie or a play—a kind of athletic soap opera. The feuds are really interesting."

After *WWF Wrestling*, Nangano hopes to move on to a project much nearer and dearer to his heart: a new edition of *MicroLeague Baseball* to be produced in conjunction with Ed Daniels, the creator of *Pure-Stat Baseball*, and Subway Software, the coauthors of *MicroLeague Baseball II*. "This project combines my two favorite things in the world: baseball and computers!" Warming to the subject, Nangano discussed the overall aim of this program: "We're going to use stats no other game has even thought of using. This is going to be so accurate, you'll smell the hot dogs. It will literally be the ultimate stat baseball game. I've definitely turned up my intensity level for this one."



MicroLeague's* WWF Wrestling, *programmed by Nangano, was extremely popular with computer gamers of all ages.

Like many designer/programmers, Nangano is also an avid game player, with a preference for epic adventures like *Dungeon Master* (FTL), *Starflight 1 and 2* (Electronic Arts) and *It Came From the Desert* (Cinemaware). "I do 95 percent of my game playing on the Amiga," he says.

As an avid baseball fan, Nangano has also played virtually every hardball stat game on the market, including *Earl Weaver*, *Pure-Stat* and *MicroLeague Baseball*. Of those games he says diplomatically: "Things can be better than that. I'm an armchair manager. Every time [Mets manager] Davey Johnson makes a move, I'm thinking: *Why doesn't he do* this? If the attributes are correctly entered, for example, you could make the computer manager more or less aggressive. That's what I like about stat games: They give you a chance to make a judgement and then test it out and see how it works."

In a world of larger and larger development groups, UpFront remains basically a one-man band. Nangano gets a great deal of help from his wife, Lynn, but does the bulk of the programming work himself. "Lynn is working for the Environmental Protection Agency now, but she's just about to join UpFront full time. We're like bookends, and she'll take care of the details while I do the programming. We're also thinking about leaving New York City." (After this interview was conducted, the Nanganos moved to scenic Delaware.)

Nangano sees a bright future for his new development group. "UpFront will get bigger and better. We'll be doing sports games for a while, then we'll expand into adventures. I'm pretty tired of arcade games, and I think the general public is also tired of them. I want to create games where people use their minds, not their wrists. It's all part of the graying of America; most people just don't play arcade games as well as they used to, and it's parents who buy the software, not kids."

As for the future of the electronic-gaming industry, Nangano has mixed feelings. "The industry's biggest problem is the way marketing dictates game design. A design should come from an idea; it should start from ground zero, then mature and blossom naturally, instead of springing from the fact that some company bought a license.

"I also believe prices have got to be lower. Forty dollars is simply too much to pay for an entertainment program. Prices have got to be more comparable to records, CDs and even videos."

Jim Nangano has finally emerged from the wings and stands at center stage, in the spotlight. He's ready to amaze and impress the audience, and he can't wait to strut his stuff. He loves computers and games and solving problems in new ways. "Everything I do is a labor of love," he attests, "at least until the program starts going with someone else."

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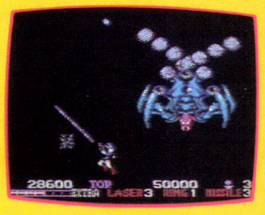
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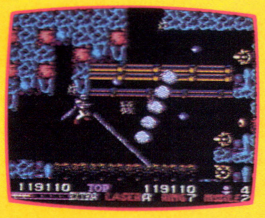
無頼戦士



A formation of deadly robo-mutants approaches.



Giganticrab makes Level 1 a formidable challenge.



Burai Fighter attempts to navigate Level 2.



The terrifying Slimedragon, master of the Burai.

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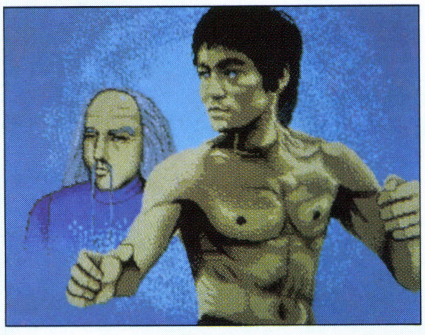
COMPUTER STRATEGIES

How to Make Sure Bruce Lee Lives

SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS
Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

In this latest karate showdown, the player assumes the role of the one and only Bruce Lee. The mission: Foil the Evil Master Po and his legion of goons to restore peace to the village. Gamers must spar their way through five increasingly difficult engagements and ultimately face Po himself before victory is theirs.

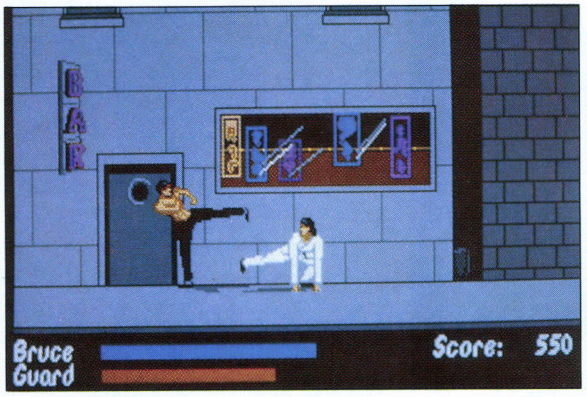
The game's strategy is interesting: It's one of the first titles to incorporate a sense of "artificial intelligence" in the enemy. Thugs actually "learn" a player's weak points to use them against him.



First off in *Bruce Lee*, you must master the basic moves and learn when to apply them. Start off in the training room by hitting the bag with the punch moves. Notice that the jab has a greater range than the punch. It's important to note at what distance each move connects if one is to be a martial-arts master. Once done, work on the special kicks such as the combination and the jump kicks. These are the most important kicks in the game because they wreak the most damage. The low, sweeping kicks are important only if the computer scrapper is aiming high, and players must duck or risk leaving Bruce's face open for jabs.

Once the moves are mastered and the player remembers where each enemy is located, it becomes time to define a macro move. The macro is important because it allows players to attack three times with a single keystroke. When programming a macro, try to pick three moves that hit different areas of the body so that the computer has trouble figuring out where to block.

The second major strategy to master in *Bruce Lee* is how to fight each opponent. Unfortunately, because of the game's ability to learn a player's strategy fairly quickly, it's virtually impossible to know exactly how to wallop everyone. The most important strategy to remember is that variety is truly the spice of life in this game. Square off with a thug, using a few jump kicks to get a feel for how he fights. If this move, or any other, is used more than two or three times in a row, the goon will "learn" to defend it and consequently turn and try the same sequence on Bruce. Be aware of this, and know how to defend the move you use on the opponent. Remember which moves are successful at a certain distance and use them accordingly, but try to constantly change the order in which the moves are delivered. This makes it difficult for the computer to learn anything from the player, therefore leading to the greatest percentage of successful encounters.



***Bruce Lee Lives* is not like most karate simulators because the program utilizes artificial intelligence to prevent you from using the same strategy repeatedly.**

A WORD ON THE MISSIONS

Mission 1 is fairly straightforward. Keep in mind that the ruffian who attacks Bruce first is not the only one in Level 1. It's important to take advantage of the fact that he has no idea how the player fights yet and is therefore open to just about anything. Once he is dispatched, the player will be attacked by a second hit man with greater abilities, so remember to mix it up.

Level 2 is even more to the point. Players battle one, and only one, man. But, oh, what a man he is! This brute is big, fat and has 50 percent more power than Bruce. On this level, it's most important to answer each of this guy's blows and let those jabs fly. Start with as many jump kicks as possible to knock his power down quickly. Once he starts defending them better, switch to a jab and low, sweeping kicks for a few seconds. The second he starts to duck the jabs, go in for a quick jump kick to knock him back a bit.

Level 3 is the first level to incorporate some additional strategy. Bruce must make it to the bottom of a ship, deploy a bomb and then escape within 30 seconds. On this level, keep in mind that since the goon squad is not deployed,

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Bruce may rest on an empty screen after each encounter, so that his strength is always full for the next battle. One can also use this strategy to avoid a losing battle. If a particular fight is going badly, simply retreat to the nearest empty screen and rebuild your power! But remember, every enemy is also busy refueling, so be ready.

Another important point: Bruce does not have to fight every palooka he sees. It's possible to avoid the thugs on the first and second floor by walking past them. This is recommended, since they serve no purpose except to slow Bruce down. Just be careful not to *run* past them because if a hood hits Bruce as he is running, he's *instantly* killed.

The last two missions shall remain a mystery since spoiling the adventure part of any game is never a good idea. However, I *will* say that although the bow move may seem pointless, there comes a time when a bow may be worth far more than any jump kick.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

Traveling Through the Mean Streets

ACCESS
Versions: Amiga, IBM PC, Commodore 64

In *Mean Streets*, an action/adventure from Access, players assume the role of Tex Murphy, private eye. It seems the noted scientist Carl Linsky committed suicide...or did he? His daughter doesn't buy it, and she hires Tex to find out what really happened. Thus the stage is set for this adventure featuring four different action sequences and a superfluity of sneaky suspects.

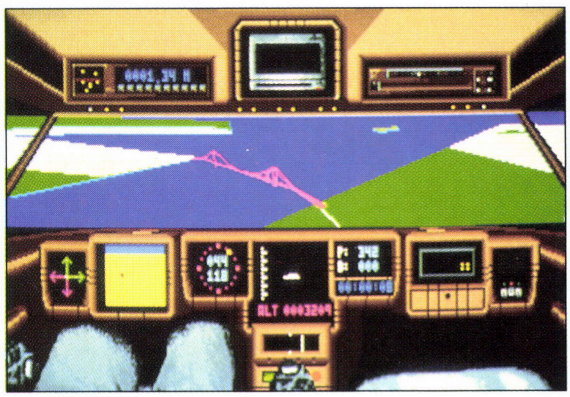
HOVERING OVER CALIFORNIA

The first sequence to master is flying the hover car. This is important because our private dick flies up and down California's coast throughout the game. Start by typing in the NC code at the prompt. Once the driving window reappears, press up to begin climbing. Stop when the craft reaches 5,000 or 6,000 feet; this is a safe cruising altitude. Once done, use the left and right controls to spin the car until the current bearing matches the destination bearing. This places the target zone directly in front of the cruiser.

Next, hit the "+" key to begin forward motion. When the car is proceeding at a decent speed, press the warp button to enter cruising speed. Now just sit back and make only slight left/right adjustments to keep Tex on course.

When the car gets within ten miles of the destination, deactivate the warp mode. Failure to do so results in overshooting the target pad. Once done, slowly decrease speed until the cruiser reaches zero miles. Finally, press the down button to land on the pad.

Of course, if this sounds a bit tricky, players can simply use autopilot to travel around town, but where's the fun in that?



***Mean Streets*, by Access, puts you in the role of a gumshoe, hot on the trail of the murderer of famed scientist Carl Linsky. The game will take you over the skies of California and into the slums—places that may get you filled with lead.**

OUTGUNNING THE OPPOSITION

Next Tex encounters gun-battle sequences in the slums of town. The trick here is to head to the right when the screen appears in order to gain as much ground as possible before bullets start flying. Once the shooting starts, duck just as the bullets reach Tex.

Next, stand and fire off a round or two. The enemy can duck as well, but they can only fire while standing. Use this weakness by ducking and firing wherever possible. If an obstacle prevents Tex from firing from a ducked position, simply stand and fire, then get back down quickly.

Remember, it's not how many cons Tex shoots that matters, it's getting to the right of the screen without looking like Swiss cheese.

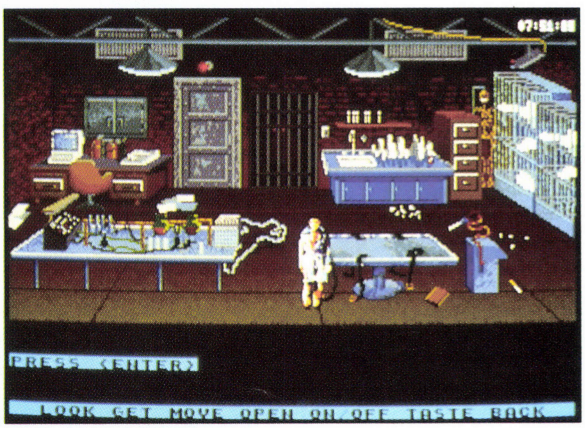
HUNTING FOR BOUNTY

Players earn extra greenbacks in the third action sequence: bounty hunting. It is possible to complete the adventure without ever daring this challenging competition. However, if players inadvertently squander their cash, it may become necessary to bag a hood or two for the booty.

This sequence is similar to the gunfights, except the men move faster, as does their gunfire. Use the duck-and-shoot strategy, described earlier, at a slightly accelerated rate, and Tex should emerge victorious and in the chips.

HUNTING FOR GOODIES

The last action sequence is a room-to-room search. This aspect of game play is crucial, requiring players to roam around in search of items that may prove useful later on. There are a few things to keep in mind as Tex rummages around.



First off, leave no stone unturned. Attempt to move, open or turn on everything Tex sees or finds. Even if something seems strange, try it. Often the bizarre works best. If an item cannot be maneuvered, pick it up. There is no limit to the items Tex may carry, so get everything, even if it's an old pair of gloves. One never knows what one may need later on.

Finally, each room has at least four places to search. Keep this in mind, and be sure to count out four separate areas before departing any chamber.

ABOUT THE PUZZLES

Figuring out what goes where and who did what is the best part of *Mean Streets*, and far be it from me to spoil it. However, a few generic hints couldn't hurt. There are two important tips to remember while conducting an interrogation. Ask everyone about everything. Don't leave a character until he or she has divulged everything he or she knows. If a character seems to be holding out, try bribing or threatening to get the information. Don't fret if Tex is rudely ejected from the room for engaging in such behavior. Simply exit the speeder and continue the interrogation.

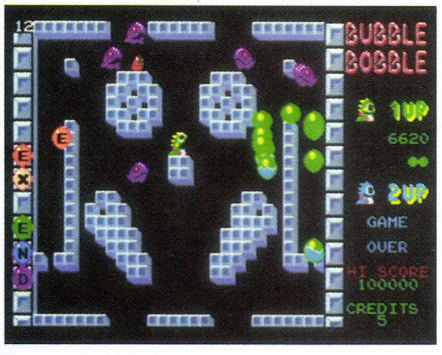
Remember that Vanessa and Lee Chin may prove to be crucial sources of information when all seems lost. Ask them about any missing persons or any term that can't be deciphered. When doing this, always go to Vanessa before resorting to Lee Chin. After all, why pay for what one can obtain free of charge?

—F.T., Jr.

Staying Aloft in Bubble Bobble

TAITO
Versions: Amiga, Apple, Commodore 64, IBM PC

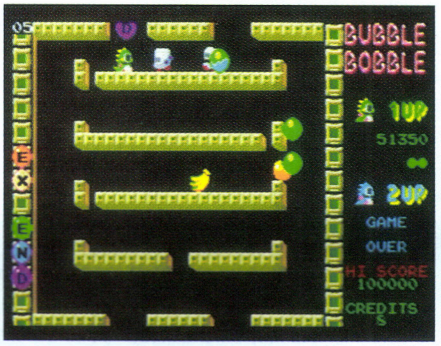
In this one- or two-player arcade game, gamers maneuver a Dino-Might around each of 100 different levels, blowing bubbles to trap



beasties. Once trapped, bursting these bubbled beasties finishes them off. Players gain points by bursting the enemy before they pop the bubbles and come back mighty angry. Additional points are scored for picking up bonus items that appear.

The main strategy behind *Bubble Bobble* is to find the best position on each level to attack from. Then let the beasties come to you. Keep in mind that the enemy can jump up a level but never down one. All creatures on the screen must fall off the edge of a level in order to descend.

Start by finding a locale with a hole under your Dino-Might, so no creatures can jump up right under him. This platform should also have at least 1 inch on each side for the enemy to fall on and still give Dino a chance to shoot him. If



two or more enemy creatures fall at Dino at once, don't panic. Just hit the fire button quickly, and he will blow many bubbles at once, trapping all the beasties rather quickly.

Once this strategic spot is determined, players should try to stay there until most of the beasties have been eliminated. Traveling with desperados is quite dangerous.

There are only a couple of times it's advisable to leave this strategic post. One is when chasing a bubbled beastie. This is important, since they escape the bubble in about 15 seconds. When that happens, they come back moving twice as fast. The other good time to flee is when a bonus object worth big points appears. Use caution here—chasing

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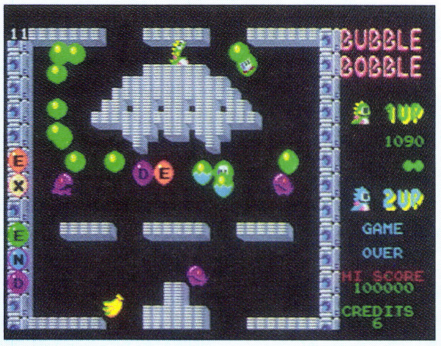
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an object when many beasties are flying around can cause death rather than extra points.

Players may be overrun by beasties emerging from all directions. If this happens, shoot at the guys in front of Dino and make a beeline for the holes at the bottom. These transport holes will bring Dino back on the top of the screen, throwing off most of the bad guys.

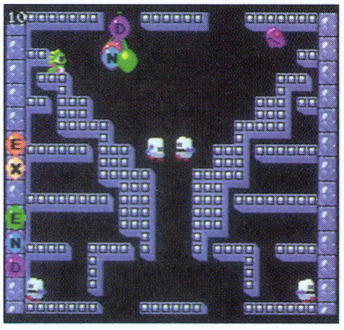


There are those, however, who will not be fooled—they can follow Dino into the hole. Be ready for this predicament by moving to the left or right when Dino hits ground and quickly turning to blast any bad guys that followed.

A few monsters are especially dangerous to our hero. Be on the lookout for Stoner, a beastie who looks like a ghost and hurls stones when he is on the same level. Should Stoner appear, blast him quickly or it's curtains for poor Dino. Grumple Grommit is another dangerous beastie who resembles a big ghost wielding a cane. He must be bubbled quickly if he appears on the same level with the gamer.

The last guy to watch out for is the white Dino-eater. He appears if players take too long to complete any level. Once "Hurry up" flashes on-screen, gamers have about 30 seconds before this white demon appears to dine on Dino. If this happens, players must scatter, never staying long in one spot: The Dino-eater moves quickly and usually right for the player.

Mastery of Dino-Might's movement is very important when running from beasties or chasing after a bubbled beastie. Anytime Dino is in the air, he may be guided left or right using the controls. This works when he falls as well as when he jumps up. Use this maneuver to guide Dino onto an otherwise unreachable platform.



Getting the letter bubbles that occasionally show up is best delayed until most of the enemies are defeated.

The last thing to look for are the objects which help Dino in his quest for Level 100. One is the letter bubbles that he can grab to spell out an extra life. Get these whenever possible, but don't risk a life to gain one.

Other important objects are the element bubbles, which contain fire, water or thunder. These spread out to waste any beastie that they come in contact with.

If all else fails, try some water therapy. A water bubble wave at the right time creates a great escape route since Dino hangs ten until it hits the bottom level!

—F.T., Jr.

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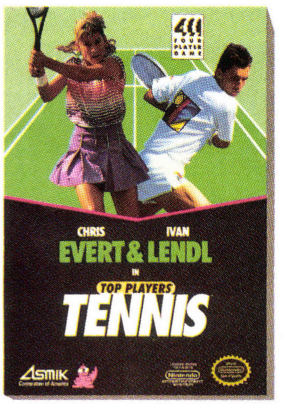
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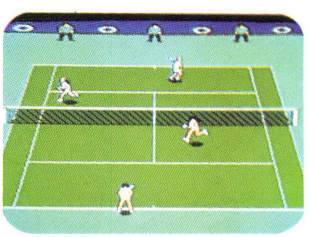


4 FOUR PLAYER GAME

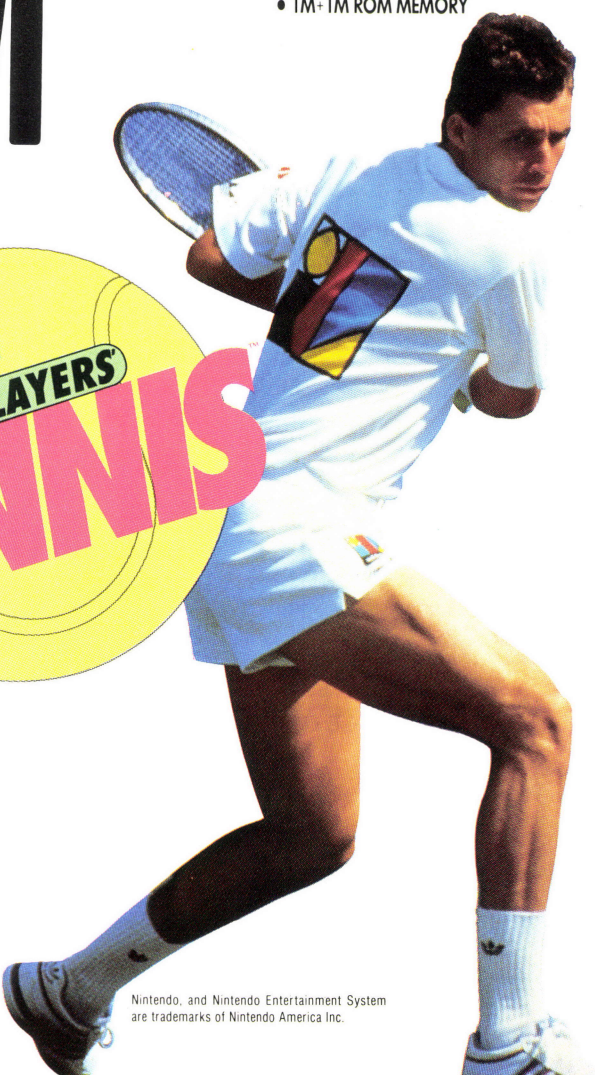
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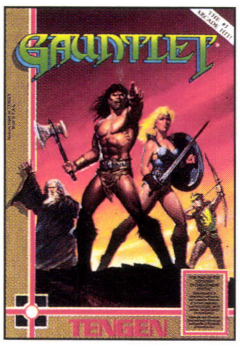


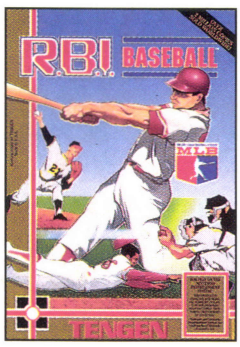
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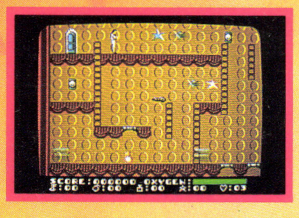
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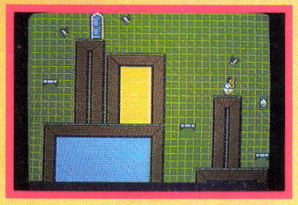
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DASH GALAXY IN THE ALIEN ASYLUM

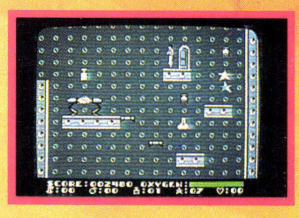
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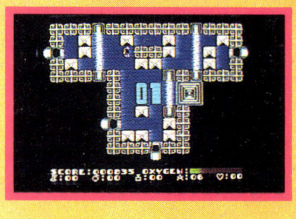




You're Dash Galaxy, fearless Space Explorer. You've just landed on a strange planet filled with intergalactic lunatics, deadly force fields and dangerous pitfalls. Welcome to the Alien Asylum — it's a real pain in the asteroid!

But hey, they don't call you Dash for nothing. You can jump and run faster than anyone in the universe. And that should help as you blast your way to the Control Complex in search of the alien spaceship — your only hope for escape. But can you find it — before you run out of air? Time to make some tracks and blow this looney bin — because the chase is on and it's out of this world!





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